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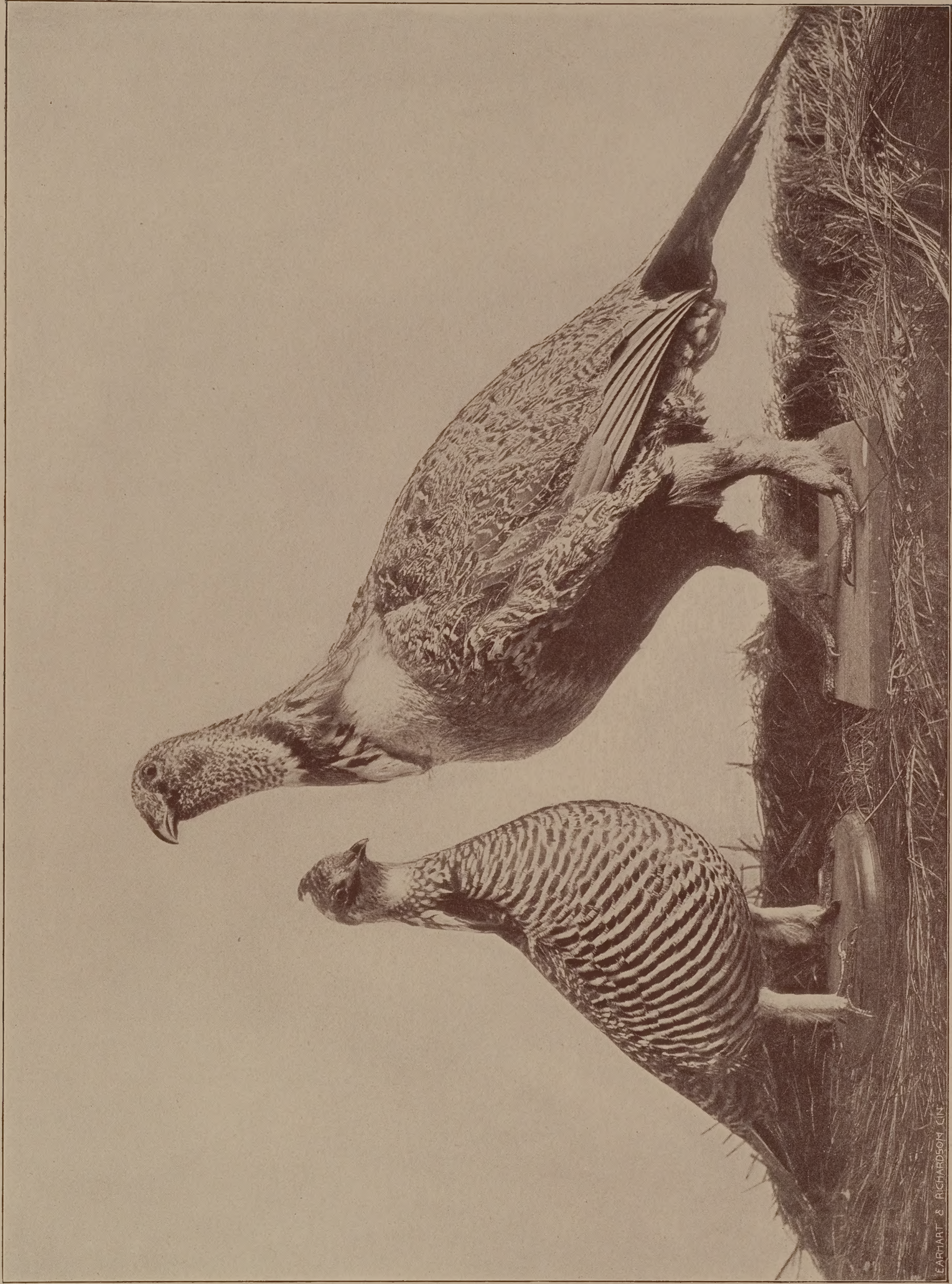
IN BRUSH, SEDGE AND STUBBLE

BY
DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON.

PART I.

MDCCCXCVIII
THE SPORTSMANS SOCIETY.
CINCINNATI.



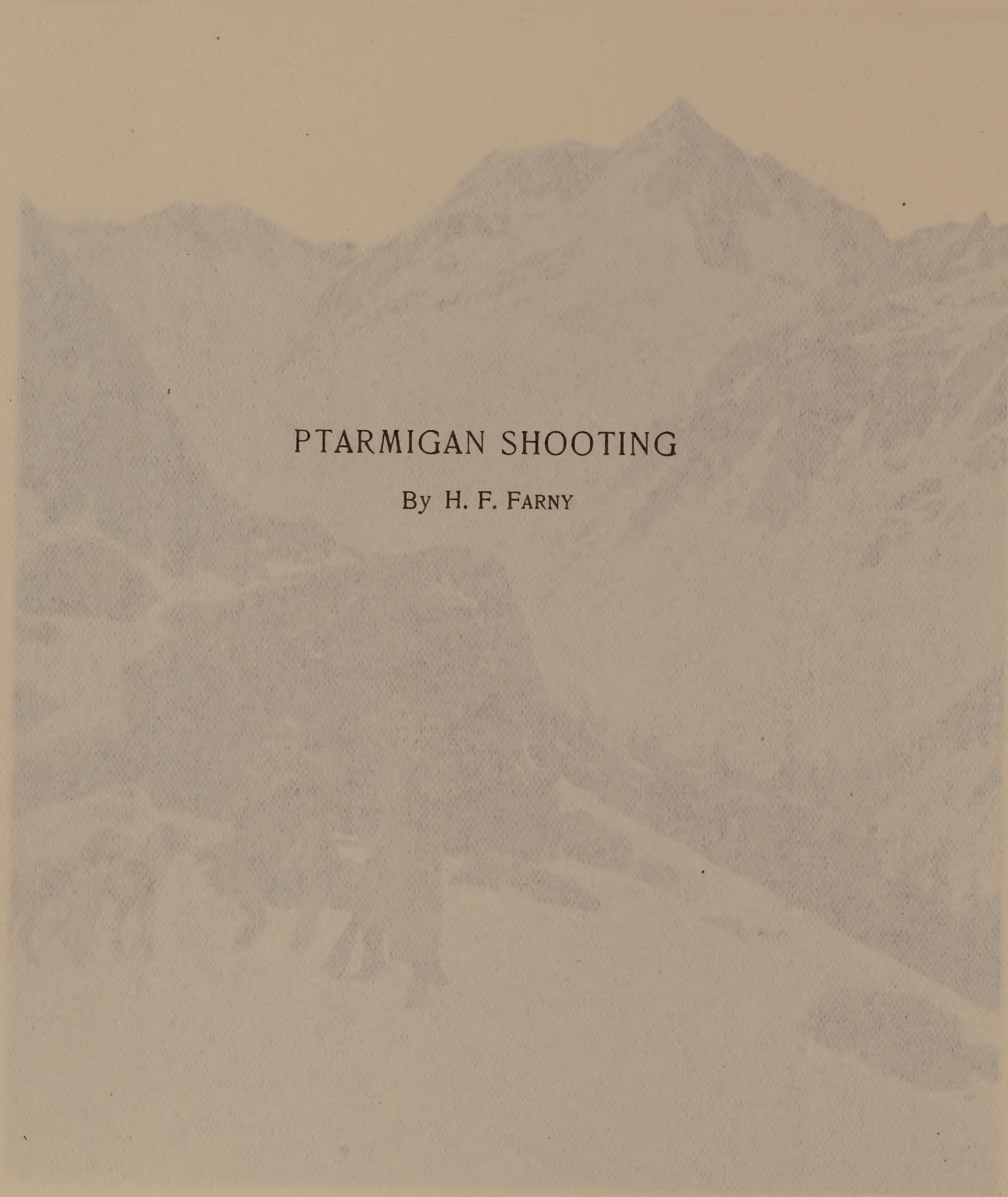


LEIGHTON & RICHMOND, LIN.

IN BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY, No. 1.

PRAIRIE-GROUSE AND SAGE-GROUSE.



PTARMIGAN SHOOTING

By H. F. FARNY

"The sportsman who climbs the highest peaks of the Rocky Mountains, far above the timber line, in pursuit of the Ptarmigans, usually obtains a magnificent view,— oftentimes nothing more."



IN
BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE

A PICTURE BOOK OF
THE SHOOTING-FIELDS AND FEATHERED
GAME OF NORTH AMERICA

BY
DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON

"Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
Than fee the Doctor for a nauseous draught."
— Epistle to Dryden.

MDCCCXCVIII
THE SPORTSMAN'S SOCIETY
CINCINNATI



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PREFACE



*N*ORTH AMERICA is rich in game birds—especially so in the number of grouse and quail—as Asia is in pheasants. America has, too, a great variety of wild fowl, including some of the handsomest ducks to be seen on any waters.

Our distinguished ornithologist, Wilson (1814), enumerates two hundred and eighty-three North American birds; the great Audubon (1844) portrays five hundred and six specimens, and we have now, according to the check list of the American Ornithological Union, no less than one thousand and sixty-eight birds, including a few extralimital species occasionally found on our shores. Of this number something over one hundred may fairly be classed as game,—the true criterion of a game-bird being that he is taken by sportsmen wherever found, and is, by way of corollary, good to eat when shot.

The following monographs on our feathered game are written from the point of view of the sportsman, with a preference for the picturesque rather than the scientific. The technical descriptions have been briefed to a minimum of space, enough being given, however, to enable the reader easily to determine what bird has fallen to his gun, provided it be a legitimate object of sport.

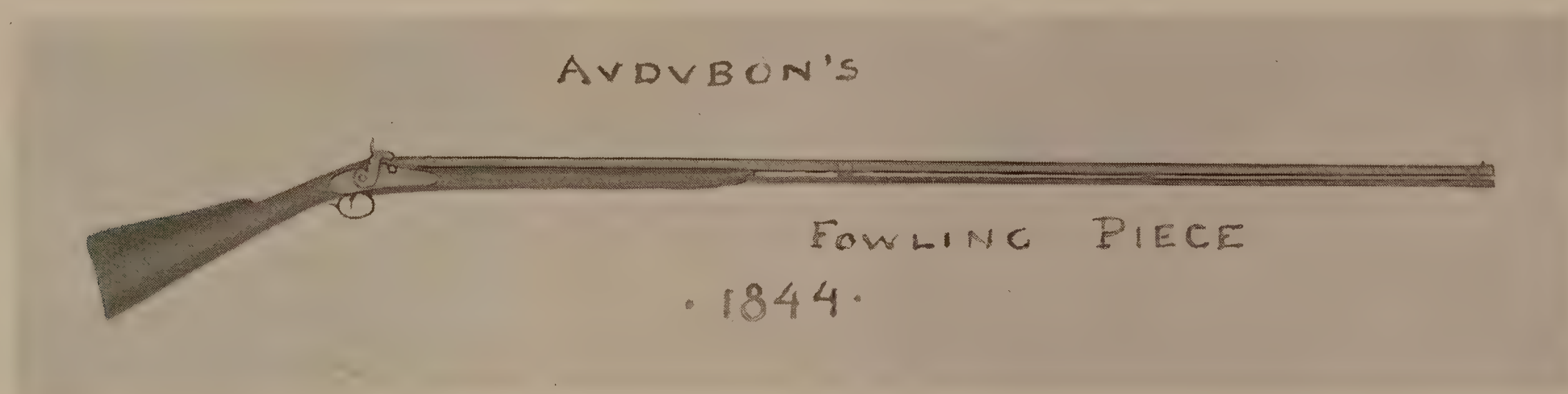
I am much indebted to Mr. Charles Dury and the Cuvier Club for the loan of some of the handsomest and best mounted birds in America; to Mr. E. J. Carpenter and Mr. A. Denniston Smith, distinguished amateurs, for many photographs; to Mr. F. B. Wiborg for the contribution of a picture by Farny; and to Mr. Frank H. Shaffer for the gun used by Audubon. I am, too, under obligations to many officers of the United States Army, who contributed to make the shooting in the Far West safe and pleasurable.

The pursuit of our game birds leads us to the fields and the forests, to the prairie, the plain, and the desert; to the streams, the lakes, the bays, and the marshes; and on many a wild mountain scramble, even (for the Ptarmigan) above the timber-line. In a word, we go out-of-doors from Montauk to San Lucas, and, listening to the whirring and whistling of wings, we observe the performance of well-trained dogs, and see America picturesque.

*"Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield."*

Cincinnati,
April, 1898.

DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON.





THE GROUSE OF THE OPEN COUNTRY



THE GROUSE are popularly known as wild chickens. The prairie grouse is the prairie-hen or chicken, the sharp-tailed grouse is the pin-tailed or spotted chicken, the sage grouse is the sage-cock, and the ruffed and Canada grouse are sometimes called wood heath hens. But the pheasants and not the grouse, according to Elliot, are the source of all the domesticated poultry found in the world to-day. There are no native pheasants in America, the nearest bird to the true pheasant being the wild turkey.

The grouse of North America may be divided very properly into two classes—the grouse of the open country and the grouse of the woods and mountains.

This classification, I am aware, is not ornithological, but it is sportsmanlike, and I write for those who enjoy sports afield rather than for those who are interested in the number of feathers in tail or wing covert.

There are, according to the authority cited, no less than twenty-seven grouse which inhabit the continent, but the list includes many birds so much alike as to appear the same to most persons not having the assistance of an expert to point out the slight differences.

From the sportsman's point of view there are seven distinct varieties of grouse: The sage-cock—or cock of the plains, the prairie grouse, the sharp-tailed grouse, the ruffed grouse, the Canada grouse,

the dusky grouse, and the ptarmigans. Three of these, first-named above, live in the open country — the prairie, the plain, and the desert. These build their nests on the ground, and all lie well to the dog in the late summer and early autumn; and, as the season advances, they pack or congregate into large flocks, when it is almost impossible to get within range of them.

The markings of the under parts of the prairie grouse are crosswise; the markings of the under parts of the sharp-tailed grouse are lengthwise.





THE SAGE GROUSE



AS WE approach the Rocky Mountains an occasional tuft of wild sage—the artemesia—makes its appearance in the grass; the soil becomes less fertile; the water in the ponds is alkaline; the grasses of the plain gradually disappear altogether, and we enter the American Desert—a vast plain of alkaline soil, white and dusty, and dotted all over with the gray-green shrubs of wild sage.

Here dwells the largest American grouse—the sage-cock, or cock of the plains. This handsome bird is twice as large as the sharp-tail, or the prairie-chicken, and weighs from four to seven pounds. The general color of the sage-grouse is dusky gray, harmonizing well with the alkaline soil and sage-brush, and this enables it, although nearly as large as a wild turkey, to conceal itself as completely as does the quail in the stubble.

At the edge of the desert the sage-cock and the sharp-tail often may be found and shot together; but, since the favorite food of the former is the leaves of the wild sage, he does not wander far from the desert. The sage-cock is a handsome bird, of trim outline and thoroughly game appearance. His head and neck are marked handsomely with black. He has a black belly, and a long tail of twenty feathers. There is a white tuft at the shoulder oftentimes. I wrote to Mr. Allen, of Mandan, North Dakota (from whom I obtained the model for my illustration), asking him as to this. He replied: “The white at or just above the butt of the wings, to which you refer, seems to be made more con-

spicuous on account of the shafts of the feathers at this point breaking off, which allows the underfeathers or smaller part of the feathers to show. All the birds I ever shot, in fact, all that I have ever handled (Mr. Allen is a taxidermist), where the plumage had attained its growth, have had these long feathers on the neck worn or broken off, only a few—generally low down and well back—on each side remaining perfect.” I confess my ignorance as to the cause. It may be that the feathers are worn off by the sharp sage through which the birds run; but, whatever the cause, it does not detract from, but rather adds to, the good appearance of the bird.

Dr. Coues says the full-grown cocks average about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length, the hens rather under two feet. The feet are feathered to the toes, as in most of the other grouse. Lewis and Clarke, in their report, first noticed this grouse, calling it the cock of the plains. They discovered it near the Rocky Mountains, in the sage-brush country, at the headwaters of the Missouri, and over the mountains on the sage plains of the Columbia. Bonaparte gave us the first technical description.

The sage-cock, like the other grouse, rises with a loud whir—making, in fact, a tremendous noise, which has been compared to a burst of thunder. Their flight is similar to that of the sharp-tail and prairie fowl—alternately whirring along at a rapid rate, and sailing with wings extended. As they fly from the ground they often utter what seems to be a scolding “cluck-cluck,” which sounds something like *tuk-a-tuk*, repeated rapidly. The sharp-tail and prairie fowl also cluck when they fly.

There is much diversity of opinion as to the table qualities of the sage-grouse. He feeds largely upon the leaves of the wild sage, which impart a peculiar flavor to his flesh. Baird, Townsend, Doctor Cooper, and others, are arrayed against him. The latter says: “The flesh tastes so strongly of the *artemesia tridentata* as to be unpalatable.” Mr. Roosevelt, however, says: “Although it is commonly believed that the flesh of the sage-grouse is uneatable, this is very far from being the truth; on the contrary, it is excellent in August and September, when grasshoppers constitute their chief food.” The birds killed by Mr. Roosevelt were shot in the neighborhood of his ranch on the Little Missouri, just east of the locality where I last shot sage-grouse.

Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Irving Dodge, alluding to the common prejudice against this grouse, and the strong sage flavor, says: “I have never been able to discover such taste, and I have eaten them at all seasons of the year. I must admit, however, that, when I have shot them in Winter, I have so far yielded to the prejudice as to remove the crop at once. At all other seasons of the year they feed as other birds do, on insects—principally grasshoppers, and I have frequently opened crops which were distended to the utmost with these plagues. To my taste there is no bird (except the field-plover) so perfectly delicious as the young sage-grouse during the month of August. It is as juicy, tender, and delicate as a spring-chicken, besides having the richest game flavor.”

Our most recent authority, Elliot, says: “When half grown, the flesh of the sage-hen is very tender and palatable, but even then the bird must be drawn as soon as killed.” Mr. Whitehead, however, mentions a member of his hunting-party in Wyoming as referring to a sage-grouse, which arose before his horse, as a “quinine brute.”

I first cooked and ate some of these birds many years ago, when with the Yale Scientific (Marsh's) Expedition in the Green River Country; we found the young ones tender and palatable, and the older birds good when drawn as soon as shot. I have shot them in Utah and Wyoming, and in Montana, and am inclined to agree with Roosevelt and Lieutenant-Colonel Dodge. The soldiers of our escort were always glad to get them, I observed, as an agreeable change from venison.



SAGE-COCK SHOOTING IN MONTANA

One of the most delightful places to shoot the sage-grouse is the Crow Country—the large Indian reservation to the south of the Yellowstone and east of the Park. The sage is not so abundant as it is in some localities, but the sharp-tail are plentiful, and there are deer in the neighboring mountains. There are acres of wild roses and sunflowers in the valleys (which add color to the landscape), and wild gooseberries, currants, and plums grow in great abundance, and the streams near the mountains are full of trout.

One day, when encamped on Henrys River, near where it empties into Green River, I went out on horseback with a friend, especially to shoot the sage-grouse. We had very steady animals, and could shoot from their backs, or dismount and leave them, for they were trained to stand without hitching when the reins were thrown over their heads. We had gone but a short distance from the camp when we flushed a fine flock, and, marking them down in the sage, we rode near the spot, and, dismounting, proceeded to put them up. The birds lay very close, but, as we kicked on the sage-bushes, one, two, and sometimes more, whirled out, and we killed about a dozen birds. Remounting, we rode on and soon found another flock, which settled at the base of a butte where the cover was quite thin, and, as

we approached, I saw the birds on the ground. Observing the way they were headed, I took a stand where they would fly past me, and my friend went in behind and flushed the birds, killing one, and, as they passed, I brought down three with my two barrels. The sage-grouse are quite a strong bird and require hard hitting to bring them down, and are much more easily killed when they present a side shot and the shot is driven under the wings or through the head and neck. We found a number of flocks during the day, and at evening returned to the camp with enough for the entire command. We could, of course, have found and killed many more birds with the aid of pointers or setters. I marked one large cock into the particular bush where he settled, and went to it immediately and kicked the bush, but no bird flew out. Deciding that it must have run I mounted my horse, and, as he turned about, the horse put his hind-foot into the bush, when out went the cock with a startling roar of wings; but, since he flew a mile or more, I did not follow him.

The army officers of the garrisons drive out in their ambulances, drawn by four mules, and when they come upon the grouse, all hands alight and beat up the birds from the sage. The ambulance in the illustration is that of the Fifth United States Infantry (General Miles' old regiment). I have had many pleasant drives with its officers.

Well-trained dogs add much to the sport, since the birds lie hard in the sage and are difficult to find and put up. A writer in "Forest and Stream," quoted by Dr. Coues, says, where there is reasonable cover, the conduct of this bird before the dog is even better than that of the pinnated-grouse.

Army officers have informed me that the dogs work nicely in the sage where there is any fresh water at hand; I believe pointers are the best, since they require less water than setters. Colonel Dodge says the grouse lie well to the dog, and adds: "Although using a muzzle-loader, I had sixteen birds down before one was retrieved." He advises the use of No. 6 shot, and says that, in two days, between breakfast and dinner,—“We bagged so many grouse, that, although we mustered some thirty persons, and all ate what they wanted, we yet carried into the post nearly 200 birds, of a weight of about 1,000 pounds.”

The sage-grouse, when flushed, do not all get up at once, and often several remain. It is well, therefore, to observe silence and to reload rapidly, so as to be prepared for a second, and oftentimes a third, shot.

I found the sage-grouse most abundant in the vicinity of Fort Bridger, and south to the Uintah Mountains. Here the tufted fields of the gray-green sage sweep up to the sides and walls of the adjacent "bad lands," or buttes, devoid of vegetation, but beautiful in color and fantastic in form. The buttes are strangely fashioned by erosion, and are full of the fossil remains of animals and fishes. Numerous domes, spires, and pinnacles surmount the buttes, and the conglomerate layers running about them have been compared to Egyptian carving. Towards the southwest are the blue Uintah Mountains, with snow flashing on their crests all summer, and towards the east the vast plain of sage extends as far as the eye can reach—blending at the horizon into an azure sky. The trout-streams, which issue from the mountain-side, become the small rivers of the plains, flowing at long intervals, and nourishing narrow lines of verdure or yellow screens of cottonwood, which mark their course. It is along such streams that the sage-grouse hunter must pitch his camp.

The sage-grouse is the Grouse of the Desert, and, according to Roosevelt, is never found near trees. "Indeed," he says, "no trees grow in its haunts." This is true of many localities, but I have often shot sage-grouse in the shade of the cottonwoods on the banks of the streams, but only when the wild sage extended up close to the trees. I once shot one from a running horse, riding at a canter into a covey, and it fell across the stream and beyond the trees. I remember the incident well, for it established my reputation with the guides as a marksman with the "scatter gun." When we were encamped on Henrys River, I shot many sage-grouse near the trees, and always looked for them in such localities toward the middle of the day. The sportsman shooting sage-grouse will sometimes start the small hare, or common rabbit, but the "Jack" or "Jackass" rabbit, immortalized by Mark Twain, is more abundant.

The sage brush and grease-wood make a fine camp-fire. At evening our soldiers gathered large quantities of both—pulling the smaller bushes up by the roots and chopping down the larger ones. We usually dined just before sunset, and royal dinners they were—a soup, brook trout, young grouse, venison or buffalo, sometimes teal or mallard, an elk's heart or buffalo tongue, canned vegetables, and fruits from the commissary, and wild grapes, gooseberries, currants, and plums. After dinner the pipes were lighted, the saddles and blankets drawn near the fire, and we listened to tales of wild adventure with Indians and bears, and of hunting the deer, the elk, and the buffalo.

THE SAGE-COCK—COCK OF THE PLAINS. (*Centrocercus Urophasianus*.) Hab.—The sage-plains from Western Dakota, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, etc., to the Pacific States, and south to about 35°. General color gray. Tail very long, longer than the wings, of twenty stiffened, graduated, narrowly acuminate feathers; lower throat and sides of lower neck, with a patch of peculiar sharp, scaly feathers, the shafts of which terminate in bristly filaments, sometimes three-fourths of an inch long in the male; below, a large black abdominal patch in the adult. Color above variegated with black gray and tawny. Length about 28 in.; wing 13; tail 13. Female much smaller.—Coues' Key, 233; Coues' Check List, 560, N. Am. B. (B. B. & R.), 111-428; Nutt 1, 666. Aud. V. 106, Pl. 297; Coues' B. N. W., 400; Hunting Grounds Great West (Dodge) 225; Roosevelt, Hunt. Tr. Ranchman, p. 92; Elliot, Gal. Game, B. 136; Recreation, March, 1897. Am. Ornith. Union Check List 309. Eggs 7 to 17 (Elliot).





THE SHARP-TAILED GROUSE



THERE is no well-defined boundary between the prairie and the plain. The traveler across the continent will observe, as he proceeds westward, that the country becomes gradually more elevated, the wild grasses grow shorter and less luxuriantly, and, as the flowers of the prairie are left behind, the prairie-chickens become fewer in number, and finally disappear; and in their stead he will see from the car-window coveys of gray, frosty-looking birds, with short, pointed tails, which are almost as numerous on the plains as the prairie-chickens are on the prairie. These are the sharp-tails—first cousins of the prairie fowl,—similar in size, but easily distinguished by the sharp, pointed tail which suggested their name. They are much lighter in color than the prairie grouse, being almost white underneath, and the upper parts are marked with transverse spots of dusky black, with large spots of white on the wing coverts and outer webs of the primaries.

Dr. Coues says: "The sharp-tails seem to stand high on their legs, and generally carry their short, pointed tail somewhat elevated; the singularity is increased when the long neck is outstretched, as it

generally is when on the lookout." I had made my illustration before reading this, and the reader will observe how closely the pose conforms to the description by America's most prominent living ornithologist. My model was a fine bird killed by my brother when we were shooting in North Dakota. He gave the taxidermist (Mr. Allen, of Mandan,) particular directions to mount the bird, as we had repeatedly seen it,—with outstretched neck and uplifted tail.

On alighting after being flushed, if not much alarmed, sharp-tails often stand motionless at full height, says Dr. Coues; but, if badly scared, they squat closely, and are then difficult to find if not exactly marked down. If without a dog, one may pass and repass them without finding one, unless he happen to stumble on them. And, upon going away after such want of success, one may look back to find the heads of the whole lot raised above the grass, intently regarding his retreat. It is astonishing how closely they can squat, even laying the head flat upon the ground, and appearing scarcely half their natural size.



SHARP-TAIL GROUSE.

I was once shooting with the Indian agent at the Cut-Head Sioux Agency, when we scattered a fine flock of sharp-tails in the short grass, and, as I approached the spot where I had marked one down, a bird flew up, which I killed, and which I supposed was the one marked; but the agent called to me that my bird was a few feet further on, and, going to the spot indicated, I carefully looked about without being able to discover it. I was about to give it up when I almost stepped on the bird, which arose with a loud whir, but I was fortunate enough to bag it. The concealment was most remarkable, as the grass at no place was much longer than the bird's legs.

Dr. Coues says: "The pinnated grouse prefers to glean over cultivated fields, while the wilder sharp-tailed clings to its native heath. The railroad will take the former along and warn the latter away." I am of the opinion, however, that the true reason for the disappearance of the sharp-tails from the eastern part of their range is to be found in the shot-gun. I have observed the sharp-tails where farms were being opened, and found they were very fond of the wheat-stubble. This is the opinion of Roosevelt, also, who spent much time in the sharp-tail country at and about his ranch on the Little Missouri. He describes a journey to the eastward, upon which he killed many sharp-tails in the stubble-fields; it was on such ground that he made the bag of 105 birds, mentioned later.

Toward the east, in Northern Illinois and Southern Michigan, the sharp-tailed grouse are found associated with the prairie-chicken, and, in the far west, I have shot them when shooting the sage-

cock where the plain and desert blend. Baird says they are always the least abundant when found with the prairie-chicken. This is undoubtedly true of the grass prairies, toward the east; but, on the plains to the west, when found together, the sharp-tails outnumber the prairie-fowl. In North Dakota I have shot many sharp-tails, but seldom found a prairie-chicken. I remember the first one; it was in a bag of some twenty-five birds killed one afternoon by the Indian agent and myself, near Fort Totten. But, in several weeks' shooting, I probably did not kill over a half dozen of the prairie-fowl. On the Lower Yellowstone, and farther west in Montana, we did not observe any prairie-chicken; but the sharp-tails were very numerous. It is well settled, however, that, as the limit of the farms is extended, the prairie-chicken are moving westward, and the common area of these grouse is being gradually increased.

The sharp-tail usually lays from twelve to fifteen eggs. I have seen coveys which I believe contained from seventeen to twenty birds. Their flight is similar to that of the prairie-fowl, rising from the ground with a loud whirring noise, and flying rapidly in a straight line, occasionally sailing with wings extended like a meadow-lark.

I first saw the sharp-tail on the trail from the station to Fort Totten, North Dakota. The driver of the ambulance, which was sent to meet me, called my attention to a fine covey running ahead of his mules. They soon left the trail and ran into the grass, and, slipping some shells into the gun, I walked them up, and killed a bird with each barrel. The legal season should commence on September 1,—possibly on August 15,—in the far north.

For many reasons, I regard the sharp-tail as the best American grouse. He is a wild, wary bird, strong on the wing, and an excellent mark, equal in size to the prairie-grouse, and of more handsome plumage. His flesh is dark, and of even a finer flavor than the prairie-chicken. But, best of all, he inhabits the high, cool plains, where there are many small lakes which furnish water for the setters.

The wide plains where these grouse are to be found are hundreds of miles in extent, for the most part still unfenced,—in some localities level, in others undulating like the waves of the sea. There is an exhilaration in setting out on a journey on the plains much like that experienced in going to sea; and the white canvas of our army wagons, at a little distance, resembled the sails of the shipping, and brought to mind the appropriate term used by the early trans-continental travelers—the “prairie schooners.”

I have had many delightful days in the West with Army officers and Indian agents as my companions. The many little lakes and ponds and small streams in the sharp-tail country are full of wild-fowl during the early autumn. I have often spent the evening with the ducks, after a successful day on the plains. The little river-bottoms, where the plain bluffs into the valley, are favorite places for the sharp-tails, and here and there an Indian tepee, or a group of them, may be seen. In driving about on the plains we occasionally passed an Indian hunter out after the grouse and wild-fowl, which he disposes of at the nearest military garrison.

The Government has, in many places on the Sioux reservation, built log-cabins for the Indians,

and they are often seen living in their tepees beside the houses, and ready, at a moment's notice, to move away with the tepee to some other locality.

The method of shooting sharp-tails is similar to that of prairie-shooting. The sportsmen drive out on the plains almost anywhere—for the birds are abundant—looking well to the little river valleys. The fastest dogs and those which range the widest are the best; when they come to a point, the wagon is driven quite close, and the hunters alight and put up the birds. Early in



FORT TOTTEN TRAIL, NORTH DAKOTA.

the season they do not all get up at once, and, by reloading rapidly, great havoc may be made with the covey. On one occasion, when shooting with the Indian agent, the post-surgeon, and another officer, our dogs pointed a large covey in a stubble-field where some Indians were harvesting the wheat. They arose a few at a time, in quick succession, and in a few moments we had shot them all. We had with us an Indian boy from the agency who held the horses and usually marked the birds, and, turning to him, I asked if he had marked them. The taciturn countenance of the Indian broadened into a smile as he replied: "There did not any get away."

With good dogs, a hundred or more sharp-tail may easily be brought to bag in a day. Mr. Theodore Roosevelt and his brother, with very inferior dogs (one of them a stub-tailed pointer, which, "for his sins," he says, "encountered a skunk, thereby rendering him useless as a servant and highly offensive as a companion"), killed, in one day, 105 sharp-tails; and, he adds: "We would have done much better with more serviceable dogs."

Mr. J. J. McNamara, of Colorado, says they are there found on the low bushy hills, those covered with scrub-oaks being their favorite feeding-places. They feed on acorns and the berries of the wild-rose. He advises looking for them on the south side of the hills, where they will be found basking in the sunshine.

I have shot most of my sharp-tailed grouse in the Dakotas and Montana. In these States the grouse are very abundant. We had excellent shooting in the vicinity of Fort Totten, on Devil's Lake, (the Great Salt Lake of Dakota), and south to the Cheyenne River, the southern boundary of the reservation of the Cut-Head Sioux. I had, as my companions, the Indian agent, Major Cramsey, and officers of the Fifth Infantry, U. S. A. The post-surgeon had an excellent Irish setter—a most untiring dog—which stood the wide ranging ahead of ambulance or wagon as well as the strong red-and-white dog of the Indian agent.

One afternoon the agent stopped at the garrison for me (it was well after 2 o'clock), and, taking an Indian policeman (with a most unpronounceable name, which translated literally into Iron Lightning, but more freely into "Bob"), we drove out behind a pair of smart horses, and, before sun-down, killed twenty-four sharp-tails and one prairie-chicken (pinnated grouse), and, as the sun set—beautifully flushing the waters of two small lakes—we took our stand between them, and killed twenty-eight mallards before it was too dark to shoot. This was the best afternoon's shooting I ever enjoyed. I made one remarkable double, killing a sharp-tail with my first barrel and a mallard with the second. I had jumped from the wagon, and was running ahead to get under a pair of mallards which were heading for the lakes, when the agent drove into some sharp-tails and shouted to me: "Mark! behind!!" One grouse came within range, and I shot it, and immediately killed a mallard which had arrived overhead.

On one occasion the grouse flew quite low over the Indian tepees, and every dog in the village gave tongue and chased after them, much to the amusement of the Indians, their children, and ourselves. In the excitement one of our setters broke and ran, but I stopped him with the whistle before he joined the Indian dogs.

On the lower Yellowstone, from Fort Buford to Forts Keogh and Custer, I found the sharp-tailed grouse very abundant. Capt. Platte M. Thorne, U. S. A., says the sharp-tails near Fort Keogh seem to frequent the vicinity of trees and bushes more than the Dakota birds. "During the last three years," he says, "they have entirely ceased coming into the river-bottoms in cold weather, and, instead, seek shelter among the pines of the divides. I have found them abundant in December, on the high divide between Powder and Tongue Rivers. The great number that used to be killed in the river bottoms in winter may have driven them to seek other shelter."

I was once shooting buffalo with a friend on the plains north of the Yellowstone, and, in the heat of a very successful run, his revolver was accidentally discharged, the ball passing downward through his leg. The wound was quite painful, and I dismounted and walked by his side, steadying and half carrying the injured leg for some ten miles or more back to the river. We crossed a number of small ravines, and, although we had no dogs, put up flock after flock of sharp-tails; I have never seen them more abundant.

Major J. C. Merrill, U. S. A., found the sharp-tailed grouse quite common in all suitable localities near Fort Sherman, Idaho, particularly about ranches on the extensive prairie north of the Fort. In



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PART II.

MDCCCXCVIII
THE SPORTSMANS SOCIETY.
CINCINNATI.



McCord
Cincinnati



IN BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY, No. 2.

THE CANADA GROUSE.



SUNSET IN DAKOTA

By D. W. HUNTINGTON

"On one occasion, when shooting with the Indian Agent on the Sioux reservation, we passed, at evening, some *tepees en silhouette* against the glowing sky."



the winter, he says: "This grouse penetrates into the pine woods for a considerable distance, passing the nights and the greater portion of stormy days in the trees."

Mr. Charles F. Allen, of Denver, says he has shot pin-tail or sharp-tail grouse in San Miguel County, Colorado, and, within sight of their haunts, he has had splendid sport with the sage-grouse; yet he found that they seldom intruded upon each other's domain.

The proper gun for sharp-tail shooting is the seven-pound twelve-gauge, loaded with number eight shot early in the season, and seven or six later.



INDIAN VILLAGE.

The sharp-tail country is strikingly picturesque. The bright costumes of its inhabitants and their artistic abodes will, however, soon disappear as the race vanishes. And the sharp-tails, too, seem destined to a rapid extermination.

The sun-rise and the sun-set are as magnificent on the plains as at sea. On one occasion, when shooting with the Indian agent on the Sioux reservation, we passed, at evening, some tepees *en silhouette* against the glowing sky. I asked the agent to stop for a moment while I made a snap-shot with my camera and a mental note of the color. Another day, as the Angelus rang from the Mission Church, a crowd of young Indians, in charge of a gray nun, dropped in the grass and lifted their little hands in supplication.

A short time after the annihilation of General Custer's command I was the guest of General Miles, then a colonel in command at Fort Keogh, on the Yellowstone. The Northern Pacific Railway was completed to Bismarck, Dakota, and I went up the Missouri River by boat with a company of

recruits for the Fifth Infantry, and marched with them up the valley of the Lower Yellowstone to Fort Keogh. The buffalo were abundant on the prairie, and, after killing a few of them—enough to supply the entire command with meat,—I turned my attention to the sharp-tailed grouse, and had excellent sport with them. One evening a large flock settled in front of our camp among the picketed mules and saddle animals. Captain Carter and I had just put on our slippers, and were seated in the shadow of our tent smoking our pipes. Without stopping to put on our shoes, we slipped some shells into the guns, and had a fine hour's sport with the scattered birds.

Upon my arrival at Fort Keogh I learned that Captain Baldwin, with a company of infantry, was just starting for the Big Horn Mountains, and accepted an invitation to accompany him. We left the garrison by a road which the Indians were building, and passed through a large village of Sioux and



WINTER IN THE SHARP-TAIL COUNTRY.

Cheyennes who had recently surrendered. The hundreds of tepees, picturesquely grouped, and the many-colored costumes of the Indians, made a picture never to be forgotten.

We made several camps in the valley of the Rosebud. Here the sharp-tailed grouse and the sage-hens were abundant. Although we had no dogs, I had no difficulty in keeping our mess supplied with birds. At the mouth of Lame-Deer Creek I spent one afternoon shooting from the saddle. I had a gentle pony, taken from Sitting Bull's command, and, riding along the margin of the stream, shot sharp-tails and mallards alternately.

One day, when on the march, a stray Indian dog joined us. As I was sadly in need of a bird-dog I made friends with him, hoping to be able to use him in locating the coveys. He was a villainous-looking animal, and suggested a cross between a wolf and a "cur of low degree." The following day, having fed him several times, I mounted my pony and started out, with the new dog ranging well ahead. He soon ran over a covey of sharp-tails, which did not fly far, and, dismounting, I proceeded to put them up. I made a nice double shot as the first birds arose; but my new friend took flight, and with the speed of a coyote ran to the top of a distant ridge, and there seated himself, and refused to return. He evidently was gun-shy, and I paid no more attention to him; but,

throughout the afternoon, I observed him from time to time, sneaking about like a wolf at a safe distance, and at evening he turned up in camp with a wolf's appetite.

As we returned from the Big Horn Mountains we followed the Little Big Horn and Big Horn Rivers, camping one evening near the adobe ruins of old Fort C. F. Smith. One of the Captain's guests was at the garrison at the time of the massacre in the hay-field, and at our evening camp-fire told the story of how the Sioux swept down upon the officers and men who were making hay in the valley and killed all of them within sight of the fort. The few who remained in the garrison stood a long siege,



SIoux CAMP ON THE YELLOWSTONE.

but finally were rescued. The following day, with such stories fresh in my mind, and having been cautioned not to wander far from the command, I sallied forth on my pony in pursuit of sharp-tails. For a time I kept the ambulance and its escort well in sight, but, stopping to shoot at the grouse, I soon dropped far behind. I did not anticipate danger. The army wagons and their escort were still behind me, and I felt quite sure they would overtake me. But suddenly a large band of Indians swept down over the natural terrace under which I was riding, and in a moment they had completely surrounded me. I observed that they were stripped and painted for war, and it was with some difficulty that I mustered up enough courage to say, "How." I referred to the fact that the soldiers were coming, and tried to make them understand that I was not alone. After a short conversation and a few grunts, the entire band put the whips to their ponies, and fording the little river, proceeded across the plain. I learned later that the Indians were Crows, and that I was in no danger. A few days afterward they had an encounter with some Sioux or Cheyennes, and an officer who was near by procured for me a handsome scalp with fresh blood on it.

The railway now traverses the sharp-tail country. There are many small towns and villages, and the picturesque scenes and exciting times are no more. I have made a number of trips to the Far West in more recent years, but the buffalo and the elk have disappeared altogether from the plains, and the antelope which remain are seldom seen.

Elliot mentions three varieties of this grouse, but their range is not well defined; the pattern is the same, and the differences are slight. I am inclined to the belief that their differences are local or climatic, and of no importance to sportsmen.

Across the Rocky Mountains, in Oregon and Washington, the sharp-tails are equally abundant, and one recent writer insists that they are far more abundant on the Pacific than on the eastern side of the mountains. The next time that I am on the Pacific Coast I certainly will look into this matter, for the sharp-tailed grouse is the best grouse of all.

1. SHARP-TAILED GROUSE (*Pediocætes phasianellus*) (Linn.). Hab.—Interior of British America, from Lake Superior and Hudson Bay to Fort Simpson. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 308; R. 478; C. 561.

2. COLUMBIAN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE (*Pediocætes phasianellus columbianus*) (Ord.). Hab.—Plains of N. W. United States and British Columbia to central portions of Alaska; northward, chiefly west of the main Rocky Mountains; eastward in Montana and Wyoming; southward to Utah, northern Nevada, and north-eastern California. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 308a; B. 463; R. 478a; C. 562.

3. PRAIRIE SHARP-TAILED GROUSE (*Pediocætes phasianellus campestris*) (Ridgw.). Hab.—Plains and prairies of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains; north to Manitoba; east to Wisconsin and Illinois; south to New Mexico. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 308b.

The prevailing colors of the Columbian or common Sharp-Tailed Grouse are yellowish-brown, or tawny and white, with black markings. The ground color of head and neck is deep buff, with small brown spots on the cheeks; upper parts variegated with transverse spots of black; wing coverts and outer webs of primaries with large conspicuous spots of pure white. Breast and sides with V-shaped markings of pale brown; throat immaculate or only minutely speckled. No appreciable difference between the sexes. Length about $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 16 inches; wing 8; tail $4\frac{1}{2}$. Elliot's description of the other varieties would indicate that No. 1 above was somewhat darker, and that No. 3 was somewhat lighter, but, as I have observed, the pattern in all three varieties is the same. Elliot Gal. Gam. Bds., 123, *et seq.*

Nutt, 1,669; Aud. V. 110, Pl. 298; B. B. & R. N. A. B., III, 434; Coues' Key, 234; Coues' B. N. W., 407; Coop., 532; Trumbull. Nam & Por. B., 137; Sp. R. & Gun, 655; Leffingwell Shoot. Up. M. & Str., 171; Roosevelt, H. Tr. Ranchman, p. 70; The Auk, Oct., 1897; Auk, Vol. 11, 211; Sports Afield, Apr., 1897, 280; *Ib.* June, 1898.





THE PRAIRIE-GROUSE

"In short, he is a very sensible man, *shoots flying*,
And has been several times foreman of the petit jury."
—*Joseph Addison.*



THE common prairie-fowl was formerly abundant in the open country of the Eastern and Central States; Audubon found it in Kentucky, and had reports of it from Massachusetts, but it has long since disappeared from those localities, and that distinguished sportsman and writer, Frank Forester, never saw one alive.

These birds, says Audubon, were so numerous in Kentucky that they were looked upon with more abhorrence than the crows are at present in Massachusetts and Maine, on account of the mischief they committed among the fruit-trees of the orchards during winter, when they fed on buds, or while, in the spring months, they picked up the grain in the fields. The farmer's children, or those of his negroes, were employed to drive them away with rattles from morning to night, and also caught them in pens and traps of various kinds. They even walked in the streets of the villages. And not a single bird remains in Kentucky to-day!

Dr. Coues found the prairie-grouse very abundant in the west. So numerous were they about Yankton that the sportsmen trapped them and used them instead of tame pigeons in a shooting-match.

They are still fairly abundant in Indiana and Illinois, and the prairie states to the west and northwest, and south as far as Texas; but their number in most localities is rapidly diminishing, and, unless there be more legislation, or the enforcement of the game laws which now exist, it will not be

long before this noble bird entirely disappears. It is, indeed, a splendid game-bird. Lying close in the wild grasses or stubble, and rising with a loud whirring noise, it presents an excellent mark, and requires, in the proper season, hard hitting to bring it down. It is strong on the wing by the first of September, when the legal season opens in Indiana. This, in my opinion, should be the opening day throughout the prairie states.



PRAIRIE-GROUSE.

I shot, last autumn, over an excellent grouse country, on the line between Indiana and Illinois. We arrived on the ground at daybreak, the first day of the legal season, and were met at the station by a farmer, who informed us we were too late. Most of the birds, he said, already had been killed. They had been shooting them since July, and he was quite sure they had killed about all of them. We had excellent dogs, but only succeeded in three days in bagging fifteen birds. Some of the stubble-fields contained but one or two birds, the sole survivors of what had been fine coveys, but most of the fields had none—and this, too, on the first day of the season! The legal season had begun, but the *de facto* season had ended. The young chickens in July and early August often do not fly strongly enough to leave the field where found, and are an easy mark to the market-gunner and others who consider it sport to shoot such game in such weather. The fields of corn offer some protection to the

grouse, and when flushed they seek this cover; and, were the shooting prohibited and actually stopped until September first, this excellent game-bird, then strong on the wing, would not be so easily or so soon exterminated.

The experiment of stocking Robins Island with the prairie-grouse was made recently. Mr. Hamblen Sears (writing for *Harper's Weekly*) says: "At just the right time of year, during the breeding season, the chickens were launched upon the island and disappeared into the cover. Days passed, and they seemed to thrive; none was found dead; none was killed by hawks or snakes. But one morning not a single prairie-chicken was left upon the island. They had given it a serious trial, and the night before had left in a body for other climes. There was no question about their having reached New Suffolk, for one or two were seen taking a look at the town a few days later, and then they disappeared altogether. The sequel came a year later, when from twenty miles across the Sound, at Madison, Connecticut, a peculiar bird was reported. It was neither quail, nor partridge, and it finally turned out to be a prairie-chicken."

The prairie-fowl weighs from two to two and one-half pounds. The flesh is dark and of a fine game flavor, and is excellent on the table. I prefer him broiled quickly before the fire, but have eaten him cooked in many ways. He makes an excellent chicken-salad.

The prairie-grouse fly rapidly, occasionally sailing, with wings extended, like the sharp-tail and sage-cock. Before the wind they go with great rapidity, probably an hundred miles an hour. Mr. Leffingwell often noticed them flying along at the side of a passenger-train, and estimates their average speed to be from thirty-five to forty-five miles an hour. I once, from a train in Iowa, observed a prairie-chicken flying quite close to the car-window, and he kept well up until a shot from the gunner who had flushed him brought him down.

The best sport I ever had with this grouse was in central and western Kansas. A few years ago I was visiting an army officer at Fort Leavenworth, and was invited to join a shooting-party which went out on a special train of one coach, with a baggage-car for the dogs. The superintendent of the railway, whose guests we were, instructed the engineer to blow his whistle whenever he flushed any grouse and to stop the train for further orders. As we sped along over the wide undulations of the prairie I admired the luxuriant grasses and wild flowers of the foreground, the golden stubbles, and the dark-green corn, with its red tassels—and, beyond, the limitless prairie, like the ocean, blending at the horizon with the sky. Suddenly there was a slowing up of the train, and the engineer (who evidently had some humor in his soul) sounded his whistle:

Tòot, too too, to—ooo: Toot, too too, to—ooo!

in imitation of the crowing of a cock, and from the car-windows we saw the wide-spread covey in full flight, and marked them, well scattered, in the prairie grass. The train stopped. There was a hurried putting together of the guns and loosening of the dog-chains, and our line was formed under some excitement, although it contained veterans. A colonel of the cavalry took the field with a fine brace of pointers, and at his side an orderly held the strings on a likely brace of young ones which had never



seen game. A lieutenant, with a handsome pair of Gordons, held the left, and I was with him. On the right, two others, with an English setter, completed the line. I had marked a single bird—which did not go far—to the very bunch of grass where he settled, and went to him without a dog. With a loud whir he arose, quartering slightly to the right, but he was an easy mark, and the first barrel stopped him.

All the dogs now had a point, and several birds arose, followed by others in quick succession. There was rapid firing, and soon it was all over. Only one bird went away, and he seemed to have a charmed life, as he flew down the line, and nearly every gun in the ranks was let fly at him. I saw the feathers fly as he passed me, and a leg was down, but on he went. Upon our return to the train the superintendent, who had mounted the top of the coach to see the sport, remarked that we had killed them all. "All but one," we answered; but he said, "You got that one, also. He hit a telegraph pole a little ahead of the engine, and now the engineer has him."

Our train went on, stopping occasionally, when the engineer flushed the grouse, and at evening we arrived at a small town, in the vicinity of which the birds were very abundant. We divided into parties of two, and for several days had as fine shooting as could be desired. Each large stubble had its covey; some had two. The dogs found them easily; they lay hard in the cover, and presented easy marks, and, of course, the bag was a good one.

Such was prairie-chicken shooting a few years ago in Kansas and Nebraska, and in Iowa and parts of Missouri, Illinois, and Texas. And such it is to-day in some favored localities; but the shooting out of season, unless it is stopped, will soon put an end to this glorious sport of the early autumn.

There is usually a scarcity of water on the vast prairies where the chickens love to roam, and they are said to sip the dew from the wild grasses, and seem to thrive in localities where there is absolutely



A "BONANZA" FARM.

no water in pond or stream. Audubon says: "The prairie-grouse rarely stand before the pointer;" and he regards "the setter as the more profitable dog there." This is, of course, an error of the distinguished ornithologist, as the birds lie equally well to pointers. I have shot them over both dogs in Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, and the Dakotas, and, early in the season, prefer the pointers. Mr. Leffingwell, after eulogizing the setter at great length, says he regards the pointer as the better dog for prairie-shooting.

The setters, with their heavy coats of hair, cannot stand the heat of the prairie, and need water much more often than the pointers. It is well to take a small barrel or several jugs of water in the wagon, as the dogs—pointers or setters—will do much better work if occasionally supplied with water. The speed of the setters is of great advantage, as the distances on the prairie are tremendous. Mr. W. P. Biddle, an accomplished sportsman of my acquaintance, says that this quality more than offsets the disadvantages. He clips the hair of his setters, and hunts them in the morning and at evening. It is often very warm in September, and on warm days it is useless to hunt for the prairie-fowl in the middle of the day. Early in the morning they may be found starting out to feed on the stubble or open prairie, and late in the afternoon they frequent the same places. My advice is, rest the dogs and yourselves, my brother sportsmen, in the middle of the day, and do your shooting in the morning and at evening. This rule is reversed as the weather becomes colder and the birds wilder. The proper method of shooting grouse on cold days in October and later in the year is to flush them in the morning—they will surely get up out of range—and having marked them down in the prairie grass they may be hunted in the middle of the day when it is warm, and often lie well before the dogs. Bogardus, who has had much experience, advises looking well to the flax stubbles, where flax is cultivated, and the bean patches, as these are some of their most favored resorts.

There is much difference of opinion, as to the proper gun and load for grouse-shooting. For my part I prefer a light gun of not over $7\frac{1}{2}$ pounds, twelve gauge, and a load of $3\frac{1}{2}$ drachms of powder, and Nos. 8 and 7 shot early in the season and Nos. 7 and 6 toward the end of September.

The so-called bonanza wheat-farms of the West offer excellent opportunities for grouse-shooting.



A KANSAS BAG.

On the great farms of the Red River Valley the sharp-tails are more abundant than the common prairie-fowl; but, as I have observed, the latter bird is moving westward, and the two birds are now often shot together. These bonanza farms are not measured by acres but by miles. Their average size is about ten square miles. William Allen White says: "It is difficult to present the idea of the bigness of these farms to the person whose preconceived notion of a farm is a little checker-board lying upon a hillside or in a valley. Seven thousand acres present the average bonanza farm. Generally these tracts are not divided. Yet distances across fields are so great that horseback communication is impracticable. Crews of workmen living at one end of the farm and operating it may not see the crews in other corners from season's end

to season's end. And in busy seasons it is found profitable to feed the hands in the fields rather than to allow them to trudge through the hot sun to the dining-halls for dinner. The dining-halls are scattered over the farm at convenient points. They are frequently five or six miles apart, and many a noon finds the harvesting-crew two miles from its hall. This illustration may give one some sort of a rough conception of the bigness of these farms."

Since many of these farms adjoin one another there is a vast range of stubble, reaching in every direction as far as the eye can reach. The traveler on the Northern Pacific Railway will observe from the car-window that for hours at a time the train runs through vast fields of grain. The farms are not so extensive in Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, but the area of wheat in some localities is miles in extent. The sportsman shooting in these States in October will often bring quail, and the two hares, to bag when shooting grouse, or, more properly, when shooting quail will add the prairie-grouse to the bag.

Mr. George Taylor, in an article, "A Day Among Prairie Chickens," in Nebraska, says: "There are three well-known and widely-used methods of shooting 'chickens.' They are as follows, viz.:

1. The hunter mounts a well-trained broncho pony, and shoots from the saddle as the birds rise before him. A good dog picks up and delivers the game to his master, who never dismounts. 2. A party of two employ a driver and shoot from an open wagon as they ride over the prairie. Dogs pick up and deliver the game as before. 3. A number of sportsmen club together and drive to the grounds, where they alight and do their shooting on foot, leaving the birds to be picked up by the wagon which follows after. The last is the most common method, and is, beyond comparison, the most enjoyable, as it gives a better opportunity for good marksmanship to tell, and at the same time affords pleasant exercise from walking."



A KANSAS DUG-OUT.

Some years ago I went with two friends to Clinton county, Illinois, especially to shoot prairie-chickens. We arrived the evening before the opening day, which was then August 15. We applied to the stable for a wagon for the following day, and were informed that everything in the shape of a wagon was engaged, and it would be impossible for us to obtain a conveyance of any kind. We were much disappointed, of course, since it was some distance to the shooting-grounds, and the distances on the prairie are tremendous. Before going to bed, however, I found a hackman with a very shaky hack who promised to drive us out in the morning. And, best of all, he was quite familiar with the country, and said he could take us where the chickens were.

We made an early start, with several fine pointers and setters; one, an old red and white dog of mine, was placed in the space between the high seat and the body of the hack, one pointer sat up with the driver, and we took the other dogs inside, where they pulled hard on their collars, with heads out of the windows, as we whirled away on the prairie.

As we passed a small unfenced stubble, at a short distance, my dog jumped from his perch on the carriage and made a handsome point. The other dogs were released and backed him as handsomely. There was but a single bird—an old cock—which went off clucking as we approached, but a shot from my right barrel tumbled him into the stubble. We had a fair day's shooting and killed some twelve or fifteen birds. I shall never forget our dilapidated hack and its load of merry men and eager dogs. During the afternoon, when engaged with some birds on the opposite side of a prairie slough, I saw the excited driver try to cross it, and his horses disappeared in the high grass and bushes, leaving the roof of the hack and the driver's head alone visible. He did not get across, and informed us later that we came near having to walk home.

The prairie-chickens are to be found in the markets, and on the tables of the hotels and restaurants, of our western cities early in July; not quite as openly as heretofore, however, since there seems to be a slight regard for the game laws in some of the cities at least; but the slaughter still goes on in the country, and Mr. Dury, the distinguished ornithologist, said to me but a short time since that he had no hesitation in predicting the entire extinction of this game-bird. Mr. Lamar says: "There is a special obligation on every good sportsman and true gentleman to do what may lie in his power to end the carnage of this fine game-bird. At the rate of butchery the past generation has seen, there would be in another decade not a single pinnated grouse to remind us of the countless multitudes." Mr. Charles E. Whitehead, in a valuable paper on the North American Grouse, says: "In winter, when the snows compel the grouse to come near the woods and the wheat-stacks for food, they are trapped in good numbers, packed in barrels, and sent to the cities of the Eastern States and even to London. It is not unusual for shippers to send a hundred barrels of this game in a single consignment to New York. It is this wholesale trapping and exportation which is exterminating the species."

Many of the Western States, since the above was written, have passed laws against the exportation of grouse, and some provide against exposing them for sale. The laws, without game-wardens, were at first little heeded, but the grouse States are now providing for game-officers, and the game actually has increased in some States. If these offices could be removed from politics and the tenure of office be lengthened, much good might be accomplished. But as yet I have heard of but little being done, and upon my more recent visits to the grouse country I usually have found that the shooting out of season and trapping had been going on to such an extent as to leave but a few birds for the opening day. Mr. Whitehead well says it requires the extinction of a valuable bird to teach the average American the importance of its preservation.

The coyote or prairie-wolf and the prairie-falcons are the chief enemies of the prairie-grouse. I have seen numbers of the hawks perched on the telegraph-poles or sailing over the prairie in the early morning, ready to pounce upon the young grouse as soon as they start out to feed. It is unnecessary, I believe, to urge sportsmen to take a shot at these enemies whenever seen. Many of the birds

are destroyed by spring-floods and prairie-fires. The hen sticks close to her nest until the cold flood or raging fire is hard upon her, then rises in alarm and dismay, and flies rapidly to a place of safety. She will, usually, if the season be not too late, nest again in some more favored locality.

The prairie-fire is a spectacle sublime. A long line of light appears on the horizon, brighter than the glare of sunset and overhung with vast clouds of smoke, illumined by thousands of sparks. Tufts of burning herbage are carried aloft, and, wafted onward by the breeze, settle in the dry grass to start the fire anew. With marvelous rapidity the wave of flame approaches, driving all animal life before it,



PRAIRIE-FIRE.

and often the swiftest animals are overtaken and destroyed. I once witnessed a prairie-fire which seemed to be coming toward us—a vast cloud by day and a vivid gleam of light by night, extending as far as the eye could reach from east to west. A fortunate change in the wind carried it by. On another occasion we were caught in a blizzard with the wind so high that our four mules could make no headway. We took refuge in a *coulée*, or draw. The air was full of ashes, driven with great velocity, but from a fire so distant we could not see it. We can appreciate the humor of the comic paper which depicted a native in the shelter of his “dug-out,” or cyclone-cellar, remarking to a neighbor that he believed it was going to blow, as he had recently seen Deacon Jones’s barn go by.

The prairie-chicken, the sharp-tails, and the sage-grouse have their “scratching-places,” where they often meet and strut about, and go through certain evolutions, which have been compared to the dancing of a minuet, and they often get to fighting. I once witnessed a number of the sage-grouse engaged in this performance just after sunrise, as we were starting to the mountains for black-tail deer.

The birds permitted us to approach quite close, and we sat on our horses and observed them for some time. We could have made a good bag of them but did not, as the firing would disturb the deer.

I am indebted to Mr. T. L. Hankinson for the excellent picture of the prairie-hen's nest. The photograph was made May 31, 1897, at Chandler's Marsh, Clinton County, Michigan.

The Texas variety of the prairie-fowl is a little smaller, and has paler and grayer colors, but the markings and pattern are the same. The distinction is one for ornithologists rather than for sportsmen. The other forms of this bird are sufficiently referred to in the notes.

1. THE PRAIRIE-GROUSE—PINNATED-GROUSE (*Tympanuchus Americanus*). Hab.—Prairies of the Mississippi valley; south to Louisiana and Texas; east to Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, and Ontario; west to the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, and Indian Territory; north to Manitoba; general tendency to extension of range westward and contraction eastward. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 305.

General color of upper parts brown, transversely marked with broad undulating bands of yellowish-red; the wing coverts and secondaries of a lighter brown, tinged with gray, and barred with paler red, the latter only on the outer webs; primary quills grayish brown, with black shafts, and spots of pale-reddish on the outer webs, excepting toward the end. Tail grayish-brown, narrowly tipped with dull white, the two middle feathers mottled with dull white. Membrane above the eye scarlet. Two tufts of lanceolate elongated feathers on the side of the neck, under which is an oblong bare space on either side capable of being inflated. Lower parts are marked with large transverse curved bands of grayish-brown and pale yellowish-gray, the tints deeper on the anterior parts and under the wings. Length about 18 inches; wing, 9; tail, 4½. Weight from 2 to 3 pounds.

Adult female resembles the male, but is without the neck sac—somewhat smaller than the male. Aud. Ornith. Biog. ii (1834), 490; Wils. Am. Orn. III, 104; Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 110; Coues' Ck. List, 563; B. 464; R. 477; Coues' B. N. W., 419; Coues' Key (1872), 234. B. B. & R., N. A. B. III, 440; Wheat., Ohio Ag. Rep., 1860, No. 178; Snow, B. Kansas, 9; Lewis, Am. Sportsman, 146; Trumbull, Nam. & Por. B., p. 134; Sp. Rod and Gun, p. 650; Shooting Up, M. and Str. (Leffingwell), 279; Harper's Weekly, Oct. 2, 1897; Outing, Sept., 1891, p. 483; as to Bonanza Farms, Scribner's Magazine, Nov., 1897.

2. ATTWATER'S PRAIRIE-HEN (*Tympanuchus Americanus attwateri*). Hab.—Coast region of Louisiana and Texas. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 305a. A bird very similar to the preceding, but darker on the back and top of head; pattern the same; somewhat smaller. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 122.

3. THE HEATH-HEN (*Tympanuchus cupido*). Hab.—Island of Martha's Vineyard, Mass. Formerly southern New England and parts of the Middle States. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 306. This bird closely resembles the common prairie-grouse; the pattern is the same. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 117.

4. LESSER PRAIRIE-HEN (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*). Hab.—Eastern edge of the great plains from western and probably southern Texas northward through Indian Territory to Kansas. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 307. Said to differ from the common prairie-grouse in being much darker above, and barred by light brown or buff, inclosed between two black bars, as is also the case on the flank feathers. Somewhat smaller; length about 15 inches. Similar pattern. Elliot, Gal. G. B. N. A., 120.





THE GROUSE OF THE WOODS AND MOUNTAINS

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods." — *Byron*.



THE grouse are easily distinguished from the quail or partridges by their size and the feathering of the legs and nostrils. The legs of the partridge are naked and scaly.

Dr. Coues says: "The true grouse are confined to the Northern Hemisphere, and reach their highest development as a group in number and variety of forms in North America, our species being singularly diverse in the details of structure. * * * The old world forms are the following: The great capercailzie, or cock-of-the-woods, which finds its analogue in our sage-cock; the black-cock of Europe represent our dusky-grouse; the Siberian, strict analogue of our spruce-grouse; the *Bonasa betulina* of Europe and Asia, equally near our ruffed-grouse; and two or three species of ptarmigan, very closely allied to or identical with our own."

The grouse of the woods and mountains, from the sportsman's point of view, are the ruffed-grouse, the Canada-grouse, the dusky- or blue-grouse, and the ptarmigans. There are in all seventeen species and sub-species of these grouse, according to the check-list of the American Ornithological

Union: One ruffed-grouse and three sub-species; the Canada-grouse, or spruce-partridge, and a similar bird in the Rocky Mountains called the Franklins-grouse; the dusky- or blue-grouse of the western mountains, with two sub-species; and no less than eight forms of the ptarmigan—the grouse of the high mountain tops and of Alaska, which, for their protection, turn white in winter.

The ruffed-grouse and the Canada-grouse are always found in the woods; the latter is chiefly a boreal bird, and is not often found south of the Canadian line. Both of these birds are at times found near swamps, and often on the mountains. The dusky- or blue-grouse is the grouse of the western forests, the Rocky Mountains, the Sierras, and the coast range. The white-tailed ptarmigan is found on the high mountain-peaks as far south as Colorado and New Mexico.

The proper gun for shooting all the grouse of the woods and mountains is the seven-pound, twelve gauge, with open barrels, as the shots are usually at close range in the cover,—No. 8 or 7 shot early in the season and No. 7 or 6 later. I much prefer setters for shooting in the woods. They are to my eyes far handsomer than pointers, but I must admit that pointers do equally good work, and that they are perhaps more easily broken, and stay in training longer than the setters.

A man will go further, I have observed, behind either of these dogs to see the wondrous beauties of forest-interiors and mountain-sides, and in the excitement of the chase, than without such companions. John Burrows puts it well from the angler's point of view when he says: "A mountain-view or waterfall never looks better than when one has just been warmed up by the capture of a big trout."

The grouse of the woods are seldom found in open fields, and but occasionally in the edge of the stubble or corn. They are wild, forest-loving birds. Like the wild-turkey, they require vast tracts of forest for their preservation, and their pursuit leads the sportsman into the most wild, picturesque, and romantic localities.

These grouse do not lie as well before the dogs as the grouse of the open country. They all have the ungamelike habit of sometimes taking to the trees when flushed. They are all swift of wing, rise with a loud noise, and are difficult marks as they go whirring through the undergrowth and branches.

There is a charm in the woods and mountains not found on the prairie or plain. The poets have there discovered more to inspire their song, the artists more to paint. The cathedral-like arches of the trees, the gorgeous autumn foliage of red and gold, the moss- and lichen-covered rocks and fallen logs, the beautiful undergrowth and tangled vines, with distant views of blue mountains and snow-clad peaks, delight the eye and gratify the soul. The sighing of the pine-scented breeze and the rippling murmur of waters are music to the sportsman's ear. I recall with pleasure many a wild mountain-scramble with Indian pony and pack-train; and there is ample compensation in the beauty of the scene for the shortcomings of the game.

We have had our ramble on the prairie, the plain, and the desert. Let us now go to the woods—the handsomest forests on the earth, bright in their autumnal coloring, and watered with crystal lakes and streams full of trout. We first visit the forests of New England and Canada, the Adirondacks, and the Alleghanies, and then proceed to the woods of the Far West, climbing for the Ptarmigans even



IN BRUSH, SEDGE AND STUBBLE

BY
DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON.

PART III.

MDCCCXCVIII
THE SPORTSMANS SOCIETY.
CINCINNATI.






IN BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY, No. 3.

THE BLUE, OR DUSKY, GROUSE.



RUFFED GROUSE SHOOTING

By D. W. HUNTINGTON

"The Ruffed Grouse are often found along
the woodland roads."



beyond the timber-line to the lofty haunts of the fleet and sure-footed big horn and the white goat. In shooting in the woods and mountains, whether the object of pursuit be the ruffed-grouse, the spruce-grouse, or the blue-grouse, the sportsman will always be in the vicinity of trout-streams, and the gun may well be laid aside for a day in favor of the rod.

Any adult grouse of our country may be readily referred to its proper genus by the following table of characters:

1. CENTROCERCUS. Tail equaling or exceeding the wing in length, wedge-shaped, of twenty stiff, narrowly acuminate feathers; neck with numerous bristly filaments, a patch of curious scaly feathers, and a large naked space. Tarsi fully feathered; toes naked. Size of full-grown cocks, two feet or more in length; tail a foot long.

2. PEDIOECETES. Tail shorter than the wing, wedge-shaped, of eighteen narrowed, stiffish feathers, of which the central pair exceed the rest by an inch or more. No evidently peculiar feathers on side of neck; bare space not conspicuous. Tarsi feathered to between the roots of the toes (In the arctic variety the feathers of the legs are sometimes so long and thick as to hide the toes, almost as in the genus *Lagopus*). Markings of under parts *lengthwise*.

3. CUPIDONIA. Tail much shorter than the wing, rounded, of eighteen broad, flat feathers. Sides of neck with tufts of a few lengthened, narrowed feathers, like little wings, beneath which is a conspicuous distensible naked skin. Tarsi barely or not feathered to the toes. Markings of under parts *crosswise*.

4. BONASA. Tail about as long as the wing, rounded, of eighteen broad feathers. Sides of neck with tufts of very numerous, broad, soft, feathers. No evident naked space on the neck. Tarsi bare below.

5. TETRAO. Tail rather shorter than the wing, square, or little rounded, of sixteen to twenty broad feathers. No peculiar feathers on the neck, nor evident naked spaces. Tarsi feathered to the toes.

6. LAGOPUS. Characters as in *Tetrao*, but the whole of the toes feathered. The species turn white in winter.—*Birds of the North-west*, Elliott Coues. Government Printing Office (1874).





THE RUFFED-GROUSE

"Partridge, they call him by our Northern streams, and pheasant by the Delaware."
—Bryant.



THE ruffed-grouse is, technically, *bonasa umbellus*. The former word from the Latin, meaning a wild bull, and the latter,—also Latin—meaning an umbrella. The drumming of the ruffed-grouse originally was supposed to be vocal, as was the whistling of the woodcock, and the bird therefore was named from the bull. *Umbellus* was added on account of the ruff of feathers on the neck, which is at times raised up, umbrella-like.

The ruffed-grouse is called pheasant erroneously in the South and West, and partridge in New England. It is, of course, neither. The pheasants are foreign birds, with long tails, and only recently have been introduced into America. The partridge also is foreign to our country, and is nearer the size of our quail, or Bob White. Doctor Coues says the ruffed-grouse is "unmistakable." No other species has the conspicuous ruffle of lengthened, broad, soft, silky feathers on the neck. It would simplify matters much to discard altogether the terms "pheasant" and "partridge."

Forester says it is unsportsmanlike and unscientific to call the bird pheasant or partridge, since it "has an excellent good name of its own." This is the more important, now that we are importing and breeding the Mongolian and English pheasants, and soon will have, throughout America, a true pheasant as one of our game-birds.

The ruffed-grouse inhabits the woods from Maine to the Western mountains and southwardly to the Carolinas and the Ozarks of Missouri and Arkansas. It is a handsome bird, brown and gray, beautifully marked with dark brown, black, and white. It formerly was quite abundant throughout the forests of the Eastern and Central States; but it is now extinct in many localities by reason of the destruction of the timber and the close cultivation of the land.

The flesh of the ruffed-grouse is white, tender, juicy, and delicious, preferred by most persons to the darker meat of the prairie-grouse, but, *me judice*, they are equally good.



RUFFED-GROUSE AND NEST.

The ruffed-grouse builds its nest on the ground, and usually lays from ten to twelve eggs. The young birds are strong on the wing by the first of September, which should be made the opening day for the shooting of this grouse. And this, in my opinion, should be the opening day for all grouse-shooting, whether in the open or in the woods and mountains. The legislation varies in different States, and in most States the season begins and ends too late.

I have before me, as I write, the laws of the States in my immediate vicinity, where I do most of my quail and ruffed-grouse shooting. In Ohio and Indiana the season opens on November 10; in Kentucky, November 15; and in Illinois, October 1. In each State this is entirely too late for good shooting. The objection to a change is, I am aware, that the irresponsible gunners and pot-hunters, when out after the grouse, would, no doubt, kill quail, and these should not be shot earlier than October 15. The season for shooting all feathered game should close with the coming of winter and before the snow flies, since the birds are easily taken with traps when the snow is on the ground and shot sitting by pot-hunters and market-gunners.

Sportsmen, writers, and artists are united in their admiration of this beautiful bird, and epicures prize him as an article of food. There are, no doubt, few better birds on the table; and, paraphrasing the saying of Dr. Boteler (quoted by rare old Izaak Walton) as to the strawberry, I may say: Doubtless God could have made a better bird; but doubtless God never did.

There is more difference of opinion when we come to consider this grouse as an object of pursuit. Forester was inclined to be against him, and, when he wrote "Field Sports," announced that he would never again go in pursuit of him; while Hammond, *per contra*, regards him as first on the list of our game-birds, and insists that he is an excellent bird on which to train dogs.

Frank Forester says it was his misfortune once to be seduced into undertaking an excursion very late in the season into the interior of Connecticut (with a friend who, while cock-shooting, moved an immense number of grouse), for the especial purpose of shooting ruffed-grouse. The result—although they had two brace of as good setters as any in the country, and fagged steadily and resolutely during four successive days—was that they bagged but seven birds, two only over points; and certainly, he says, they did not fire altogether above ten or eleven shots.

On other occasions, once or twice, he adds: "I have been persuaded, contrary to my opinion, to go out of my way to beat for ruffed-grouse, or to devote a day to their especial pursuit; but I never in any one case have been successful." He declares further, that he will never again attempt this, or advise any person to do so.

Hammond says: "Our favorite sport since childhood has been the pursuit of that best of all game-birds, the magnificent ruffed-grouse. Many writers pronounce this beautiful bird unfit to train a dog upon; they rail against his subtle cunning and are unstinted in condemning his swiftness of wing, and earnestly advise you to keep your dogs away from the ruffed-grouse's haunts. Notwithstanding the evident sincerity of these writers, we must beg to differ from their views."

Here we have two sportsmen and writers of ability diametrically opposed to each other. One says he will never again go in pursuit of the bird, and the other regards its pursuit as his favorite sport. There can be no doubt that these birds do not lie so well as the grouse of the open country; but, early in the season,—the last of August and during September—they lie fairly well; and, in certain localities, where the undergrowth is heavy and the ground covered with fallen logs, and in swampy, level woodlands, the birds lie much better than on hillsides, where the ground is quite open beneath the

bushes, and where the birds can run easily before the dogs. Forester went in pursuit of them just before Christmas, and on the worst possible ground. I have no doubt that fair bags can be made in the Maine forests, and in Wisconsin and Minnesota; and Mr. Whitehead mentions making a bag of twenty birds in northern New York—which number certainly should satisfy any sportsman.

Doctor Lewis writes that early in the season, when the grouse are young, they will lie much better, and are always in fine condition for the table, owing to the great abundance of wild fruit that they



IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

obtain. The golden rule of grouse-shooting, as in fact of all bird-shooting, is *silence*. Doctor Lewis is right when he says it is a well-established fact that grouse will bear the presence of a dog, or even the report of a gun, much better than they will a single sound of the human voice.

The best method of pursuing successfully this wild and crafty grouse is with careful, well-trained dogs, preferably those which have had much experience with this bird. Should a bird flush wild, as they often do, observe his line of flight and follow him up *immediately*. Only the excuse for not returning a partner's lead of trumps should prevent this. A second time he will not fly so far, and finally he may lie well before the dog and present a fair mark.

Mr. Hammond gives the same advice: "Should your bird escape the first onslaught, let no common occurrence prevent you from immediately following him up. Do not undertake this in a half-hearted manner, but put your whole soul into the work, and rest not until you have again routed him. Give

him a shot as he rises, and if he again escapes be not discouraged, but with renewed efforts try him again, secure in the knowledge that, can you but find and keep him moving—although he may be the wisest and, consequently, the wildest grouse of them all—at last your reward is sure.”

The ruffed-grouse often are found along the woodland roads. I have hunted this grouse in New England, and in Ohio, Illinois, and some other localities—including a few places in the Rocky Mountains—but nowhere have found the birds very abundant. I am not one of those, however, who consider a very large bag essential to a day's enjoyment afield. I have no doubt, from what I have learned from others, that there are places in the States of Maine and Minnesota, in northern Michigan and Wisconsin, and in the Rocky Mountain States, where a good bag may be made in a day.

Mr. Sandy observes: “In the hundreds of square miles of stately forest and tangled second growth on the upper peninsula of Michigan, ruffed-grouse are perhaps more abundant than in any other portion of the American Continent.” Mr. Roosevelt found these grouse in the Far West on the same ground with the spruce-grouse and the dusky-grouse, and I can imagine no handsomer bag than one containing these three magnificent birds.

Major J. C. Merrill, U. S. A., found the ruffed-grouse exceedingly abundant in the vicinity of Fort Sherman, Idaho. “Many,” he says, “are killed by ranchmen, and others over dogs trained to tree the birds, and the local market is plentifully supplied. One man told me that he no longer cared for them on his table, but that he still fed his dogs on them.”

I had my first experience with this grouse in the forests of northern Ohio. The birds were quite abundant in the dark wooded ravines of the small streams which flow to Lake Erie. I had many delightful rambles in the woods, richly carpeted with ferns and wild flowers and winter-green, and often heard ‘the partridge thunder;’ but in those days I was a very poor marksman, and with my single-barrel gun bagged few birds. I renewed my acquaintance with this bird during my residence in Connecticut, but saw but few specimens. In northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, I later had fair sport with the ruffed-grouse, but the undergrowth was very heavy, and I never made a large bag.

On one occasion, when shooting with a friend in the woods along the west shore of Lake Michigan, we killed a few birds, using only a retrieving spaniel. We found the birds along the woodland roads, and the shooting was all snap-shooting and quite difficult. One shot I remember well, since it was followed by a remarkable performance on the part of the dog. The bird was flushed on our left, and my friend made a quick shot at it as it crossed the narrow road, shooting a little behind it but knocking out most of the tail-feathers. We heard it fly on for a long distance through the almost impenetrable underbrush until the roar of its wings died out, and we decided not to follow it. But the dog slipped away unobserved, and sometime afterward I discovered him at my heel with the tailless bird in his mouth.

The ruffed-grouse are quite abundant in some parts of the Adirondacks, and in the Alleghanies, south to Tennessee, North Carolina, and northern Georgia. They also are found in the White and Green Mountains, in fact throughout the New England forests and mountains, in places where the woods have not been cleared too much, and where there are not too many summer guests.

I often have shot ruffed-grouse when in pursuit of quail. On one occasion we drove a fine covey from the stubble into the edge of a large woodland, which had a small stream running through it—a mere rill of water which we could step across in places. On one side there was a cattle-trail, and the woods were open here and there; but on the other side, the saplings, briars, and undergrowth of all sorts made the shooting very difficult. My companion, who lived in the vicinity, took to the brush with his pointer, while I made good the path. I had a setter, reliable and staunch, and it was not long before he made game. I spoke a word of warning to my friend to ascertain his location, and he answered that his dog also had a point. Suddenly, with a tremendous roar of wings, a ruffed-grouse arose, and, as he crossed through the underbrush, we fired simultaneously, and the bird fell dead. I should have let him go, for he went somewhat to the left and fairly belonged to my companion. At the report of the guns, another bird arose, and as he went off down the path I killed him easily. Before I could reload, two



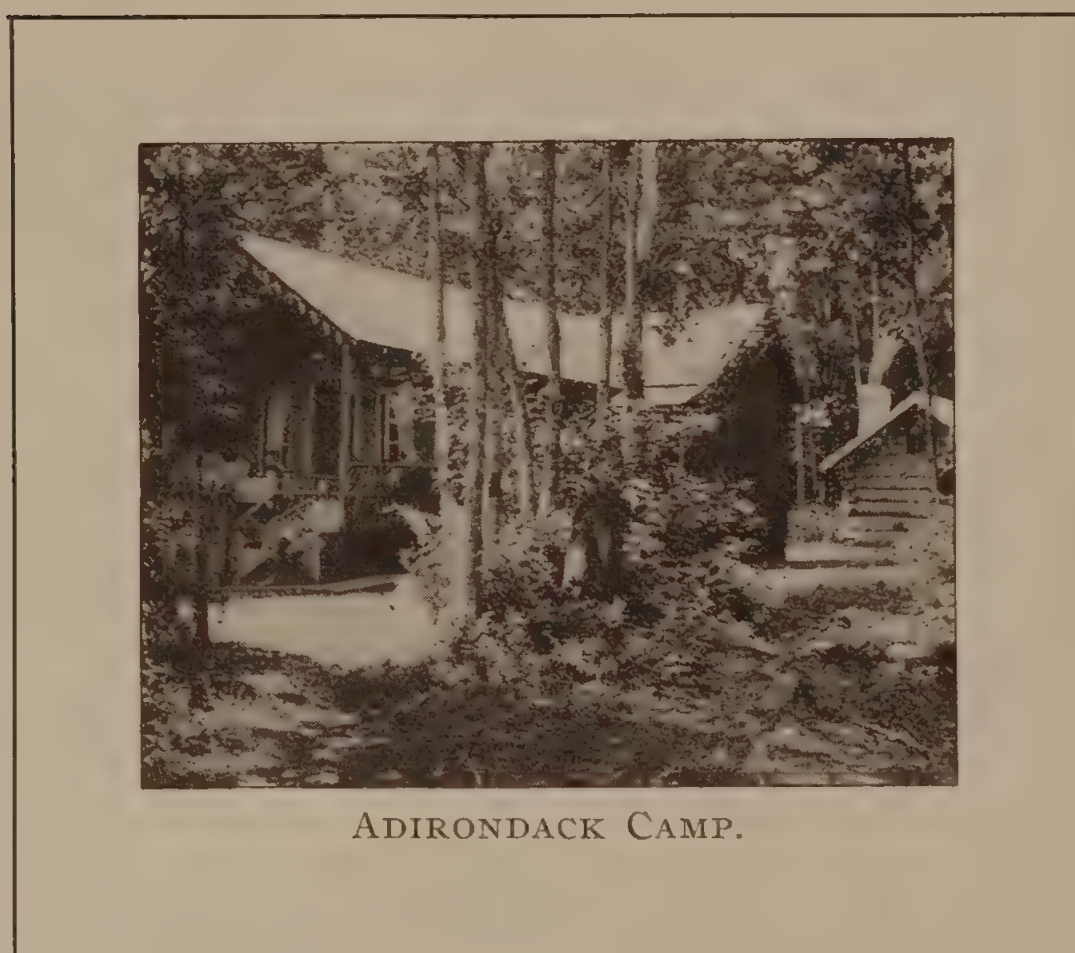
THE DRUMMING PLACE.

more birds whirled up to the tops of the saplings and my friend killed one of them. My dog moved forward a few paces and, pointing again, a quail flew out, and then another grouse, followed by several quail; then three more grouse, another quail or two, and finally a single grouse, which presented a difficult mark, rising through the thicket on a curved line to the right. But I stopped him as he crossed a rail fence a long distance away, and a country boy who was passing, shouted: "He's down, running in the road!" Later, my dog retrieved him. For a few moments the birds arose so rapidly as to be most confusing, but we bagged in all five grouse and three or four quail in a very few minutes; I have never seen the shooting more lively.

I was once in the same neighborhood with a friend, a most excellent quail shot. We had good dogs and hunted some little distance apart. Late in the day, as my companion passed behind a thicket which bounded one side of a large stubble-field, I heard him fire a number of shots in rapid succession; when he joined me he had six ruffed-grouse, all killed over one point. Not a single bird escaped, although some of them took the second barrel to stop them. But it is quite unusual to find this grouse lying so close. The sportsman usually obtains but one or two shots before the birds all take wing.

Indeed, he more often will find but a solitary bird or, perchance, two or three together. According to Hammond there is no other game-bird in the world which so taxes the skill and patience of dog and man as a sly old cock-grouse, most fertile in cunning resources to evade you and escape when seemingly you have him safe. The difficulties attendant upon his capture render him a prize indeed when brought

to bag, and his picturesque surroundings and table qualities have earned him the title of King of Game-Birds.



Forester says: "The constantly-repeated tale that the ruffed-grouse, when it alights in trees in companies,—which it occasionally will do in the spring, when eating the young buds, of which it is extremely fond,—will allow the whole flock to be shot down, one by one, without stirring, provided the shooter takes the precaution of shooting that which sits the lowest on the tree first, is as fabulous as it is on the face ridiculous." I have been informed, however, by very reliable persons who have accomplished this feat, that it can

be done, not only with the ruffed-grouse, but with the Canada- or spruce-grouse also.

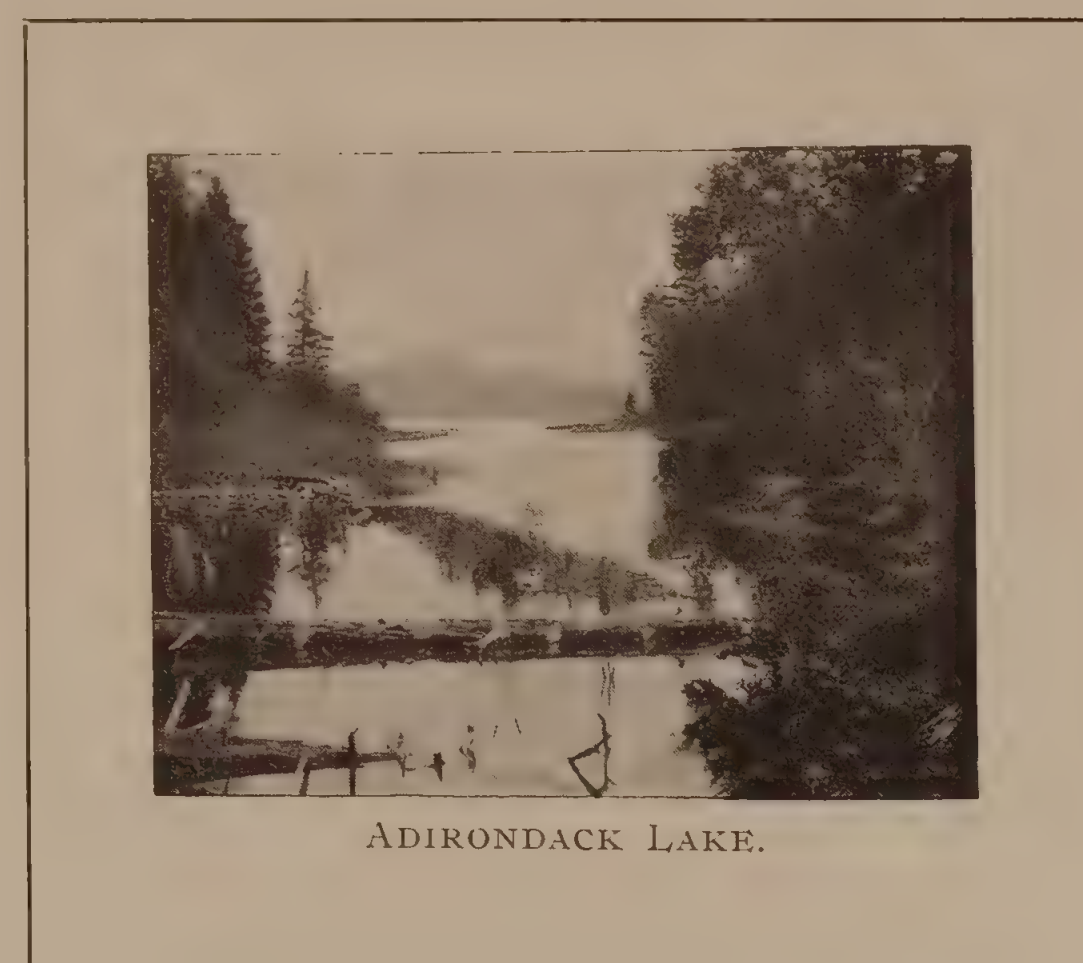
The grouse are said to lie well to a point on the first days of snow.

Early in the year the ruffed-grouse mounts a stump, log, or stone, and, raising its tail and the ruff on its neck, proceeds to make a peculiar noise which is called "drumming." I once was in the vicinity of a camp of Sioux Indians, who were holding their corn-dance, and at evening I heard a distant sound: *Tum, tum, tum, tum*,—and was reminded of the drumming of the grouse. Had the repeated drum-beats quickened, and ended in a roll, the imitation of the drumming of the grouse would have been excellent.

There is a great variety of opinion as to how the grouse produces this noise. The sound begins slowly and measuredly, and increases gradually in quickness, until it ends in a roll. According to Mr. Whitehead, it has the same accelerated pace and about the same duration as the call of the raccoon, and is heard only in the day-time, as the raccoon's is heard only at night. Mr. Frank Rattermann, who was the guest of Mr. Emile Werk at his camp in Minnesota, informs me that they repeatedly heard the grouse drumming after dark.

He said there could be no doubt about it, for he had been reading the above quotation from Mr. Whitehead, in a short article on this grouse which I wrote for a magazine, and remarked at the time that I was in error,—not noticing that the matter was quoted.

As I have observed, the sound formerly was believed to be vocal. Audubon says the drumming is performed in the following manner: "The male bird, standing erect on a prostrate, decayed trunk,



raises the feathers of its body in the manner of the turkey-cock, draws its head toward its tail, erecting the feathers of the latter at the same time, and, raising its ruff around the neck, suffers its wings to drop, and struts about on the log. A few moments elapse, when it draws the whole of its feathers close to the body and, stretching itself out, beats its sides with its wings in the manner of the domestic cock, but more loudly and with such rapidity of motion after a few of the first strokes as to cause a tremor in the air not unlike the rumbling of distant thunder."

Wilson and Nuttall give somewhat similar descriptions of the production of this noise. Mr. Ridgeway,



IN THE ALLEGHANIES.

writing for the *American Sportsman*, says: "Most writers follow Audubon and Nuttall in saying that the drumming is produced by striking the wings against the body; but, from accounts given me by reliable sportsmen, there is no doubt that the above high authorities are in error."

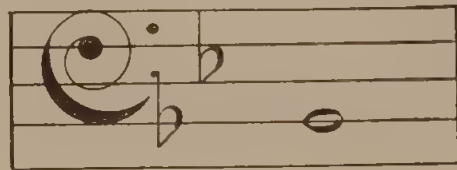
It seems to be well settled that the noise is produced by the wings beating the air.

Ridgeway says the fact that the drumming of the ruffed-grouse is heard as often in autumn as in spring, has raised the question of *why* this sound is produced. In regard to this, Nuttall is probably correct in saying that it is often "an instinctive expression of hilarity and vigor, as well as the call-note of the male during the breeding-season."

Mr. S. P. Cheney says: "A grouse near the barn often gave us 'the stormy music of his drum,' and of the many who saw him in the act of drumming, I do not recall one who had a correct idea beforehand of the way in which the 'partridge thunder' is produced. It was supposed to be made by the striking of the bird's wings either against the log or against his body; whereas it is now plainly

to be seen that the performer stood straight up, like a junk bottle, and brought his wings in front of him with quick, strong strokes, smiting nothing but the air—‘not even his own proud breast,’ as one distinguished observer has suggested.

“Wilson thinks the drumming may be heard nearly half a mile. He might safely have doubled the distance; though, when we consider the low pitch—B-flat, second line in bass staff, the fact is



surprising. The tones somewhat resemble those of any deep drum, being very deceptive as to distance, often sounding near when far off, and far off when near. I would describe the drumming as a succession of thumps, the first dozen of which may be counted.

“The first two or three are soft and comparatively slow; then they increase rapidly in force and frequency, rushing onward into a furious whirl, the whirl subsiding into a sudden but graduated diminish. The entire power of the partridge must be thrown into this exercise. His appearance immediately afterward attests this, as well as the volume of sound; for he drops into the forlornest of attitudes, looking as if he would never move again. In a few minutes, however, perhaps five, he begins to have nervous motions of the head; up, up it goes, and his body with it, till he is perfectly erect—legs, body, neck, and all. And then for the thunder once more.



“The partridge, as the bass-drummer, is an important member of the feathered orchestra.”

Mr. C. A. Cooper says: “From all that I can learn, this bird does not drum in captivity.” But Mr. J. H. Batty reports that he once caught a grouse in a mink-trap, and carried it home and put it in a large feed-box, which was standing in the open air under the shade of an apple tree. When returning from a hunting excursion one day, he writes: “One of my neighbors said, ‘Your partridge has been drumming.’ I put an old stump in the box of my captive and it had the desired results, for the next morning it was drumming loudly.”

I first heard this remarkable noise—the strangest sound to be heard in the woods—many years ago when shooting squirrels in the forests of northern Ohio, and I wondered for a long time before finding out what it was that produced this extraordinary ventriloquial booming.

The sportsman in pursuit of this game-bird oftentimes will observe the gray squirrels, the fox squirrels,—and I have occasionally taken a black squirrel—in the forests near Lake Erie.

There are three sub-species of this handsome grouse mentioned in the Check List: The Canadian ruffed-grouse, the gray ruffed-grouse, and the Oregon ruffed-grouse. But the pattern is the same in all; the differences in the markings are slight, and, from the sportsman’s point of view, they are one and the same bird.

Dr. Coues observes they are ruffed-grouse, each and all of them, and we may ignore the varieties unless we desire to be very precise. They are merely geographical varieties of the same bird, differing a little in color according to certain climatic influences to which they are respectively subjected. Mr. Whitehead maintains the same position.

Elliot has attempted to portray in black and white the various sub-species, but they all look alike.



RUFFED GROUSE.

I am indebted to Mr. D. J. Hotchkiss, of Fox Lake, Illinois, for the picture of the nest of this grouse, and to Mr. G. Hills, of Hudson, N. Y., for the setting-bird and nest.

I. THE RUFFED-GROUSE (*Bonasa umbellus*) (Linn.). Hab.—Eastern United States and Southern Canada from Massachusetts to Northern Georgia; Mississippi and Arkansas and westward to the Dakotas. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 300.

Upper parts reddish brown and gray with black marking; on the back, arrow-head or heart-shaped spots of light gray; the loose feathers of the neck, and those sweeping backward from the shoulder region, boldly mottled reddish brown and black, and marked with light gray; at either side of the neck a glossy black "ruff" or "shoulder-knot," the feathers forming these being cut almost squarely at their broadened end, and differing greatly from the long, narrow neck feathers of the pinnated-grouse. Upper neck, back, and side of head and crest a speckled mixture of the bird's tints generally. Tail light gray, with faint tint of yellowish brown, broadly spreading like a fan, and crossed by wavy black lines, and, near its extremity, by a broad black bar. Much of upper plumage minutely flecked with black. Belly and breast mottled or brokenly barred, and feathering of flanks more broadly and decidedly barred with dusky brown and white. Lower neck, sides of breast, and much of under parts tinged with light,

yellowish brown, a richer yellowish tint showing itself back of the vent. Throat buff, front and neck crossed by a narrow bar, brown, white, and bright tan markings. Toes, and naked part of leg just above them, gray; the remainder of leg covered with hairy feathers of brownish white. Bill horn color, dark above and light below. *Nam. & Por. B.* Trumbull, 144.

Adult female very similar. *Aud. Ornith. Biog.* V. (1839) 560. *Wilson, Am. Ornith.* VI. (1812) 46; *Forester, Field Sports*, Vol. I, p. 240; *Hammond, Dog-Training* (Training vs. Breaking, Forest and Stream Series); *Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A.*, p. 74 *et seq.* *B. B. & R., N. A. B.*, iii (1874), 448; *Coues, Key* (1872) 235; *Coues, B. N. W.*, 420 and authorities cited; *Sp. Rod & Gun*, 639; *Shooting Up. M. & Str.*, 79; *The Century*, May, 1888; *Outing*, Feb., 1897; *Lewis, Am. Sp.*, 134.

2. THE CANADIAN RUFFED-GROUSE (*Bonasa umbellus togata*) (Linn.). *Hab.*—The spruce forests of northern New England, northern New York, and the British Provinces; west to Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia; north to James Bay. *Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List*, No. 300*a*.

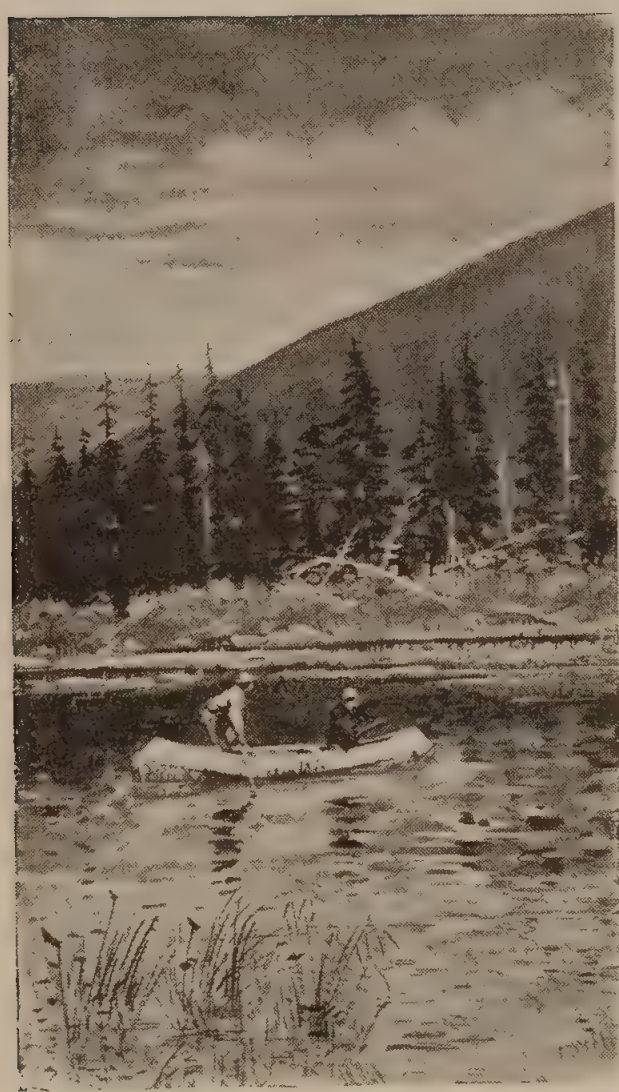
3. THE GRAY RUFFED-GROUSE (*Bonasa umbellus umbelloides*) (Douglass). *Hab.*—Rocky Mountain region of the United States and British America; north to Alaska; east to Manitoba. *Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List*, No. 300*b*.

4. THE OREGON RUFFED-GROUSE, OR SABINES-GROUSE (*Bonasa umbellus sabini*) (Douglass). *Hab.*—Coast ranges of northern California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. *Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List*, No. 300*c*.





THE CANADA-GROUSE—SPRUCE-PARTRIDGE



THE Canada-grouse in some localities is called the wood-partridge, black-or spotted-grouse. It is the blackest of the American grouse, but little larger than the ptarmigans, and, next to the latter, probably the least familiar to sportsmen. This grouse inhabits the spruce-forests of Maine and the northern States, and the Canadian provinces, north toward the Arctic region as far as the woods extend, and west to the Rocky Mountains, where it is replaced by the variety called Franklin's grouse—a very similar bird—the distinction between the two birds being of little importance to sportsmen. The prevailing color of the Canada-grouse is black, with numerous sharp white bars and spots on the under parts; the upper parts are finely waved with gray, or tawny. The female is lighter and browner, is not so handsome as the cock, and is, perhaps, a little smaller.

Audubon describes the breeding-grounds of this grouse as being as difficult to traverse as the most tangled swamps of Labrador. "The whole ground," he says, "is covered by the most beautiful carpeting of verdant moss, over which the light-footed grouse walk with ease, but among which we sunk at every step or two up to the waist, our legs stuck in the mire, and our bodies squeezed beneath the dead trunks and branches of the trees, the minute leaves of which insinuated themselves between my clothes,

and nearly blinded me. We saved our guns from injury, however, and, seeing some of the spruce-partridge before they perceived us, we procured several specimens. They were in beautiful plumage, but all male birds. It is in such places that these birds usually reside, and it is very seldom that they are seen in the open grounds beyond the borders of their almost impenetrable retreats. On returning to my family, I found that another hunter had brought two fine females, but had foolishly neglected to bring the young ones which he had caught and given to his children, who, to my great mortification, had already cooked them when my messenger arrived at the house."

Forester notes that he never but once shot this bird, although he tried for it on several occasions in the State of Maine, on the waters of the Penobscot. The single specimen which he killed rose suddenly from the ground, which was covered with snow to the depth of a foot or more, in a little



PARADISE CAMP.

dell or basin full of tall larch and spruce-firs, just as he came over the brow of the hill, and he was fortunate enough to kill it at long range by a snap shot. He was inclined to believe that it was not a bird which would be found to yield much sport, as he doubted its lying to setters or pointers, or being met with in sufficient numbers to render its pursuit pleasurable or exciting. Sir John Richardson found all the thick and swampy black-spruce forests between Canada and the Arctic sea abounding with this species. The Canada-grouse are said to be found further south in winter; but they stand the cold well and in the severest weather of midwinter may be found in considerable numbers even as far north as latitude 67°.

The Canada-grouse, when not much pursued, usually is quite tame. When flushed it flies but a short distance and alights on trees. A friend of mine who made a canoe trip across the State of Maine informs me that he has shot several from one tree, and found the birds, in many places, too tame to afford much sport. Mr. Lord often has shot several from trees upon which there were others, without the latter attempting to fly away.

The ruffed-grouse, however, also is quite tame when not much shot at, and I am inclined to believe that as much sport may be had with the one bird as with the other, the conditions being the same. The spruce-grouse no doubt would lie as well to the dog, and, having had some experience with the gun, would fly as far as the ruffed-grouse and become quite as wary.

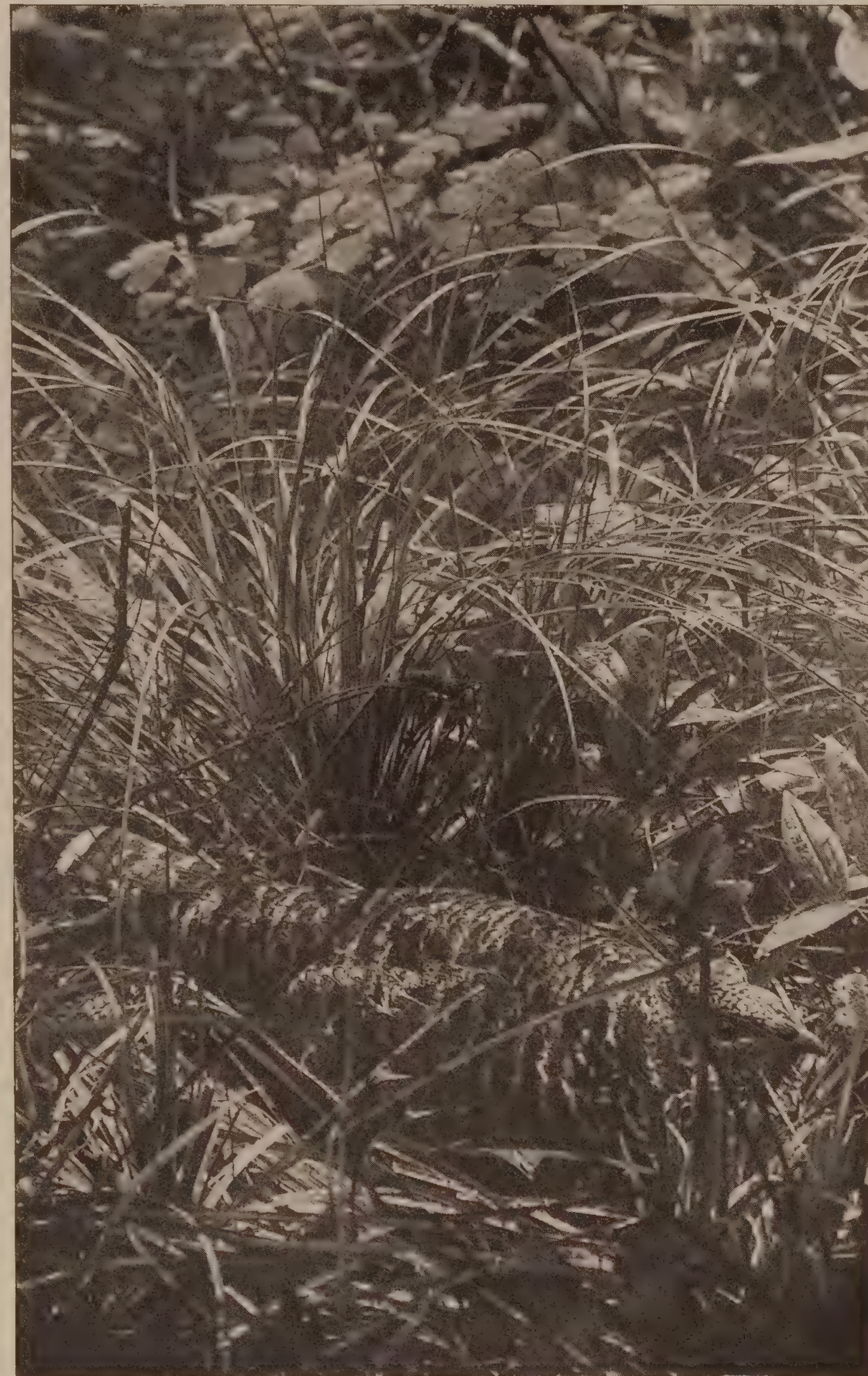
Mr. John Burroughs found the ruffed-grouse in great abundance in the Adirondacks, and says that the Canada-grouse also was common. He shot eight of the latter in less than an hour on one occasion; the eighth one, which was an old male, was killed with smooth pebble-stones, his shot having run short.

The ornithologists speak of this grouse as a stupid bird, and Mr. Elliot says: "Many are caught by a noose fastened to the end of a stick, the grouse permitting this to be placed around its neck without moving, when it is jerked off its perch. I have seen birds push this noose aside with their bills without changing their position, when through awkwardness, or unsteadiness of hand on account of a long reach, the noose had touched the bird's head but had not slipped over it."

Audubon says the Canada-grouse indicate the approach of rainy weather by retiring to roost at an unusual time of the day whenever a storm is impending. If observed to fly up to their roost at mid-day, he thinks it rarely fails to rain or snow before evening, and if, on the contrary, they remain busily engaged in the search of food until sunset, the night and the following morning are pretty sure to be fresh and clear.

Richardson invariably found the crop of this grouse filled with the buds of the spruce-trees in winter, and at that time its flesh was very dark and had a strong resinous taste. In the summer it feeds on berries, which render its flesh more palatable. Audubon reports the flesh of this grouse dark and edible only when it has fed on berries. In winter, when it feeds on the leaves of trees and other plants, the flesh is quite bitter and disagreeable.

Forester says: "In one respect only I must venture to differ from the great authority (Audubon), and this on a point only whereon the least scientific may be allowed to differ from the opinions of the wisest, since it is admitted everywhere that *de gustibus non est disputandum*. I have eaten it in winter, and then only, and, while I must admit the almost resinous aromatic bitterness, I venture to pronounce



CANADA-GROUSE ON NEST.

it delicious in the extreme; and I believe that all epicures in game will agree with me—all those, I mean, who prefer the backbone and thighs of the ruffed-grouse of America, or the moor-fowl of the British Isles, to the tamer white meat of the breast. European readers will understand the flavor I allude to, when I state that it closely resembles that of the capercailzie, as imported from Norway in the winter season."

I have referred to the variety of opinion as to the table qualities of the sage-grouse, and there seems to be as great a difference of opinion as to this bird. Mr. Walter M. Wolfe, referring to the Rocky Mountain form of this grouse, says: "In August the flesh is in prime condition and equally interesting to gourmand and sportsman. Two months later the flesh will begin to assume a resinous flavor, and, by the first of January, par-boiling with onions will fail to take away the taste of spruce-gum."

The same writer says the spruce-grouse commonly rears two broods in a season, and the young of the first brood will be found to have attained almost their full growth by the middle of August. During August and September they afford first-rate sport and act like game-birds. They lie well to the dogs, but will not allow the shooter to walk over them before they can be flushed. Flying swiftly, but not far, they afford good wing-shots.

Dr. Coues found the Canada-grouse abundant in Minnesota, where it enjoys congenial resorts, but he never observed it in northern Dakota, where the country is too dry and open. While along the northern boundary he heard of a "black chicken," which he supposed was this species, and there is reason to expect its occurrence on the wooded Pembina and Turtle Mountains.

The Franklin-grouse inhabits the northern Rocky Mountains near the United States boundary, and west to the coast range. The difference which characterizes this bird is said to consist chiefly in the rather longer, more even tail, with broad feathers, which are pure black instead of very dark brown, and entirely without the orange terminal band seen in the other variety.

Douglass admits that the habits of the two birds are the same, and Richardson and Drummond regarded these birds as only a western variety of the Canada-grouse. Audubon obtained specimens from the Rocky Mountains and from the plains of the Columbia differing in nothing from others procured in Maine and Labrador. He also compared those in the Edinburg Museum, which Mr. Douglass was pleased to name Franklin's grouse, with several of his own, and felt confident they were all of one and the same species. From the sportman's point of view, the habits and method of pursuit being the same, they certainly may be regarded as identical.

Mr. Roosevelt found and shot this bird in the same forest with the ruffed-grouse and the blue- or dusky-grouse of the Rocky Mountains.

The Canada-grouse drums like the ruffed-grouse, and in the mating-season also struts like a turkey. It is said to cluck when it flies, as do the sage-cock, prairie-hen, and sharp-tailed grouse. I am much indebted to Mr. G. O. Shields, the editor of *Recreation*, for the picture of the Canada-grouse on its nest. The picture was made by Mr. Carlin, and is one of many most remarkable pictures of live game which have recently appeared in that magazine.

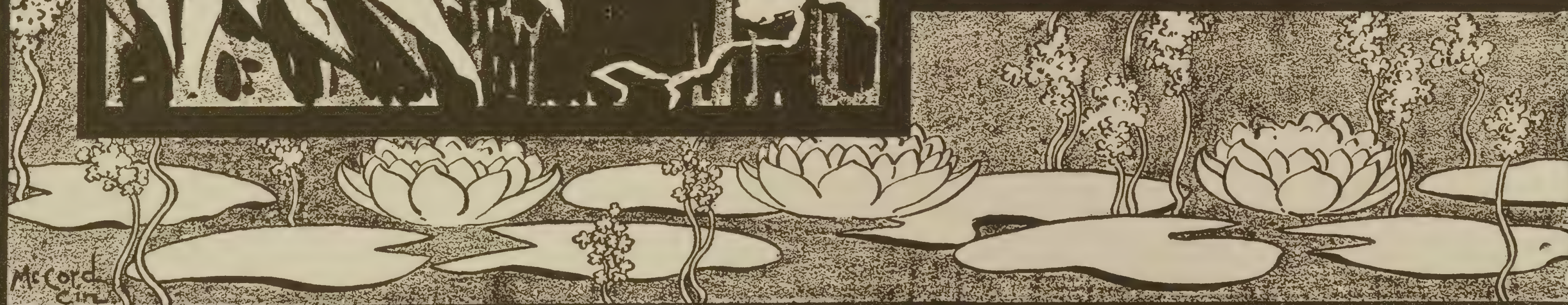


IN BRUSH, SEDGE AND STUBBLE

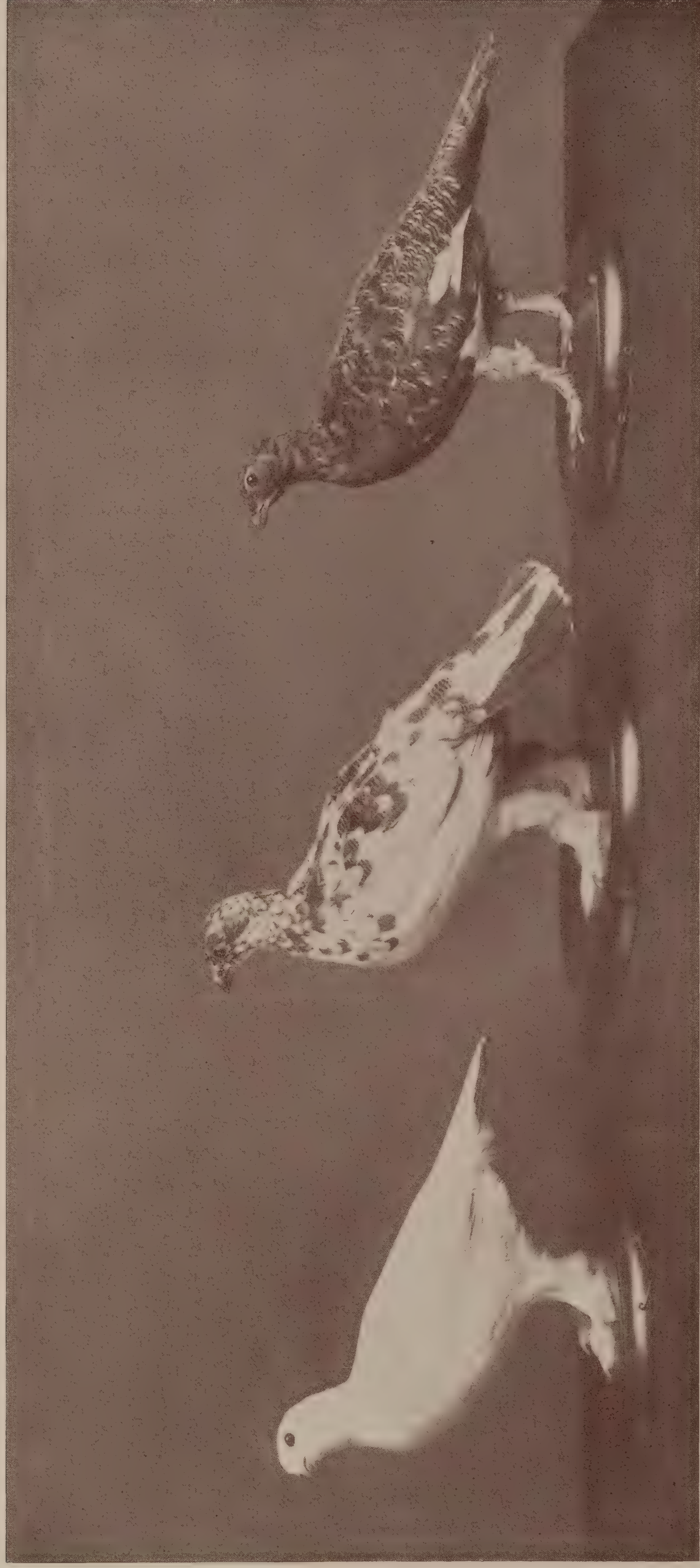
BY
DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON.

PART IV.

MDCCCXCVIII
THE SPORTSMANS SOCIETY.
CINCINNATI.



McGord
CIN.



IN BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY, No. 4.

THE PTARMIGAN.
Winter, Spring, and Summer Plumage.



BLUE-GROUSE SHOOTING

BY W. A. McCORD

“The blue-grouse lie fairly well to the dog; fully as well, I believe, as the ruffed-grouse of New England and the Eastern and Central States.”



1. CANADA-GROUSE (*Tetrao Canadensis*) (var. *Canadensis*). Hab.—From Kadiak, Alaska, through British North America to the Atlantic Ocean, and from the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains through the northern tier of States to the coast line of New England. Elliot, Gal. G. B. N. A., 104; Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 298. Male—Head, neck, and back barred with brownish black and slate-gray. Wings light brown, variegated with darker brown, gray, and occasional touches of white. Tail-feathers very dark brown with light-brown tips. Throat black, skirted with speckled white. Front of breast plain brownish black. Sides of body variegated with grayish buff, dark brown, and white arrow-like markings. Lower surface blackish brown, variegated with white. A red membrane (or comb) over the eye. Legs feathered to the toes.

Female—Membrane over the eye less noticeable. Tail-brush tan color and dark brown. Legs feathered as on the male. General plumage a bright speckled mixture of light tan, dark brown, light gray, and white; the white not appearing upon the back proper, scarcely present about the head and neck and showing most noticeably on the lower parts.

Length 15 to 16¼ inches. Extent 21 to 22 inches. Trumbull, Nam. & Por. B., 140; Coues, B. N. W., 394 and authorities cited; Aud., Ornith. Biog., 11 (1834), 437, v. (1839), 563, Pl. 176; Coues' Key (1872), 233; Elliot, Monog. Tet.; B. B. & R., N. Am. B., 111 (1874), 416, Pl. 59, f. 516; Forester, Field Sp., 1, p. 71, Pl. opp.; Sp. Rod & Gun, p. 646; Wolfe, Sh. Up. Mar. & Str. (Leffingwell), 182; Dr. Lewis, Am. Sp., p. 153.

2. CANADA-GROUSE (*Canachites Franklini*) (var. *Franklin Grouse*). Hab.—Rocky Mountains from northwest Montana, through Oregon and Washington, and the coast range of British Columbia to Alaska. The nest of this species resembles that of the Canada-grouse, merely a shallow depression in the ground or moss, lined with leaves or grass, and the eggs resemble exactly those of its relative, but are slightly smaller. A single brood is raised in a season, and nesting commences the latter part of May or beginning of June. This species and the preceding are very much alike in the general color of their plumage, but Franklin's grouse can always be recognized by the broad white bars at the end of the upper tail-coverts, and the tail itself is without the white edging, and is more inclined to a square shape or is only slightly rounded. In size the two forms are about equal Elliot, Gal. G. B. N. A., 108; Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 299; Coop. & Suck., N. H. Wash. Ter. (1860), 220; Coop. B. Cal. 1, 529 (1870); Elliot, Pr. A. N. S. (1864), 23; Monog. Tet.; B. B. & R. N. A. B., 111, 419, Pl. 59, f. 3.

The portrait of Rip-Rap is from the *Sportsmen's Review*. Rip-Rap was one of the first, if not America's best pointer.





THE DUSKY-GROUSE



THE dusky-grouse—often called the blue-grouse or pine-grouse—is one of the largest and handsomest of the American grouse, being second in size to the sage-cock, or cock-of-the-plains. It sometimes weighs as much as three and a half pounds. The flesh of this bird is white and palatable and similar to that of the ruffed-grouse. The blue-grouse lie fairly well to the dog; fully as well, I believe, as the ruffed-grouse of New England and the Eastern and Central States. These birds, in fact, are very similar in their habits to the latter. They are great wanderers afoot, and live upon a similar diet, chiefly berries, insects, and buds of the pines. They are more or less solitary, usually being found alone or in very small companies.

They frequent the woods and mountains, and occasionally are seen in the edge of the stubble or in the mountain meadows.

Mr. Whitehead describes this grouse as a marvelously graceful bird, often quite black, or blue black, and flecked here and there with little pencilings of white feathers, looking as though crystals of new snow had fallen upon it, and says also that it always has that distinguishing mark of the grouse family—the colored streak over the eye, which in this bird is scarlet.

The flight of the blue-grouse is rapid and strong. It arises with a loud roar of wings, and is a similar mark to the ruffed-grouse, only larger. I have no hesitation in saying this is one of the finest of our game-birds, but I can hardly agree with Dr. Newberry that he is the handsomest. The ruffed-grouse is his equal in beauty, and I am half inclined to say his superior. The ruffed-grouse has been



BLUE-GROUSE SHOOTING.—BELLE NOBLE ON POINT.

often called the King of Game Birds; but I would say, King of the East, and name the blue-grouse as King of the West.

The blue-grouse are found in the Rocky Mountains, principally south of South Pass, and in the Sierra Nevadas north to Oregon and south to the San Francisco Mountains, New Mexico. Dr. Suckley found them exceedingly abundant when his exploring party reached the main chain of the Rocky Mountains, but not more so than in the Blue Mountains of Oregon, the Cascade Mountains, and in all the timbered country between the last-mentioned range and the Pacific coast.

In the spring the male grouse struts like the wild turkey, stepping "gingerly along, overcome for the moment by the extent and force of his amatory feelings." He also inflates the air-sacs on the sides

of his neck, and gives forth a loud booming noise, which can be heard for a great distance, and which is termed "hooting." A writer for one of the magazines, in an article on the dusky-grouse, gives an excellent description of the hooting of the cock and the cooing of the hen. "Often," he says, "when in the woods, had I heard this sound and been unable to account for it. One day, however, when out on a mountain-side specimen-shooting and fern-hunting, I heard, when well on toward the evening, the same cry, proceeding, apparently, from a thick forest of Douglas firs at the foot of the slope which



LOGGING CAMP.

I was on; and the place seeming suitable, I made up my mind to trace the puzzle to its source. Through the scented woodland on the drowsy, languid air, the dreamy hooting of the grouse floated to my ears. * * * Quietly I walked toward the spot whence seemed to issue the mysterious sound. Hark! There it is again—one short note, loud, mellow, and yet withal a seemingly subdued 'coo,' repeated at intervals of two minutes. After going a short distance I heard a rustling in the leaves just in front of me and paused to ascertain the cause. The next moment, from behind some short brush, a large cock-grouse stepped out in full view, and strutted about with swelling neck and tail proudly spread, his wings slightly expanded, and his red eye cerces glowing like vermilion. Unconscious of my presence he went through his maneuvers, but whether these were hostile or amatory I could not then tell. I had kept my eyes fixed on him, watching every movement and holding my breath for fear of

alarming him. Soon I became aware of the fact that the cooing noise was drawing nearer and nearer by degrees, until it seemed to come from a small clump of bushes just beyond his lordship's circus ring, while that gallant seemed every moment to be nearer the bursting-point. Presently the grass began to quiver, the cry meanwhile having stopped, and then across the track of the cock, lithe and crouching,



LOGGING.

with coy upturned eye, softly stole the hen-bird." Audubon never wrote anything better, and I regret that I cannot give credit for the above quotation.

The grouse should not be shot during the "hooting" season. I have read many accounts of gunners (NOT sportsmen) hunting the grouse in the spring and locating them by this noise.

I first observed this bird many years ago when with Marsh's Expedition in the Rocky Mountains. I was somewhat handicapped, however, by the presence of large game, as there was, at times, an objection to the use of the gun. The first blue-grouse I ever saw took flight from a low bush as we were ascending a deer-trail which followed a mountain brook in the Uintahs. I remember the incident well,

for the shot alarmed a large band of elk which was browsing but a short distance ahead, as we were informed by unmistakable signs a few moments later. The grouse was a fine cock-bird, and when we made our camp for the night we shot a few more of them and had for our dinner, elk tenderloin, blue-grouse, and trout.

Our camp was beside a beautiful mountain lake in the edge of the timber. The Ute Indians had evidently preceded us. We saw where their tepees had stood, and the ashes of their fires indicated that their camp was quite recent. It had rained a few days before, but the ashes showed no signs of having been wet. Our guide was an old beaver-trapper and a thorough woodsman, accustomed to note every sign. He did not seem to like the close proximity of the Utes, and put us all to bed between fallen logs, with instructions (in the event of an attack, which, he said, would begin with wild shouts and firing) not to get up until he gave the order to "let 'em have it." The camp fire burned low. A lot of wolves, attracted by the carcasses of the elks, which we had hung up in the trees, came quite close and howled dismally. Some owls in the pines joined the chorus, and I found it difficult to go to sleep. At last the fire died out; a half-burned stick broke in two, and a bright flame sent the shadows dancing through the pines. But immediately this went out and it was dark. By this last light I saw the guide sit up between his logs and look about and then lie down again; and not long after I fell asleep.

In the morning most of our party went out after deer and elk, but I took a stroll in the forest about the lake with the gun. The blue-grouse were almost too tame to be interesting. When flushed they flew up into the trees and stood gazing at me. I soon gave them up to shoot at some duck which were on the lake. It was from this camp that we went above the timber-line for the ptarmigan. The little openings in the forest were richly carpeted with flowers, and in one glade I counted over thirty varieties. I found the blue-grouse very abundant in the mountains, but, as my gun was undoubtedly the first they had ever heard, they were quite tame—too tame, indeed, to afford much sport. When not much disturbed they usually fly up into one of the nearest trees, where they can be shot sitting if one cares for such marks. When in Salt Lake I was informed that they were very abundant in the mountain parks, not far away, and throughout the Wasatch Mountains, but I was obliged to decline an invitation to shoot them there. I have since had several opportunities for blue-grouse shooting in the Rocky Mountains.

On one occasion we had our camp on a little trout stream which flows through the Black Cañon of the Big-Horn Mountains. I was the guest of Captain Baldwin, of the Fifth Infantry, who had permission to take his entire company upon a shooting expedition. Game of all sorts was very abundant, and one morning I went forth with fishing-rod for trout and shotgun for the blue-grouse, intending to procure enough for dinner. I had gone but a short distance, and was still in sight of the camp, when I found the grouse without the aid of a dog. My shooting started three black-tail deer, which made off down the narrow cañon and directly through the camp, jumping the tent-ropes as they went. Every gun in the command, I believe, was let fly at them, but without success. Proceeding but a short distance I observed numerous tracks of grizzly bears about the margin of the stream, and returned to camp to exchange my gun for a rifle.

Dr. Suckley refers to the extreme tameness of these birds, and says he has known an entire flock of five concealed among ferns and grass to be shot, one by one, without an attempt being made by a



IN THE BLACK CAÑON.

single victim to fly. About the middle of November these birds are said to disappear entirely, and it is very rare to meet with even a single specimen between that period and the twentieth of the following March. As to their whereabouts during this period there is a great difference of opinion

among the settlers. Some maintain that they are migratory, and retire to the south; others are of the opinion that they retire to the tops of the highest evergreen trees, where they pass the cold season in a state of partial torpor among the thickest foliage of the branches. As they subsist well on the leaves of the coniferæ, and can always obtain sufficient water from the snow and rain-drops on the leaves to supply their necessities, Dr. Suckley was of the opinion that the latter is the correct account, or that, if migratory, they are but partially so.

Dr. Cooper says: "This fine game-bird is common in Oregon and northern California, extending on the coast range nearly to San Francisco Bay, and in the Sierra Nevada to about latitude 38° . They



IN THE BLUE-GROUSE COUNTRY.

are brought to market in winter from the mountains near Napa, and are said to come down at times into the valleys, but have never been met with in California south of San Francisco. In the Sierra Nevadas, latitude 39° , I found them rather scarce, and in September only above an elevation of 6,000 feet, but was informed that they went much lower down in winter, probably about as far as the snow falls, or to about 2,000 feet in that latitude. I think their range is more dependent upon the prevalence of spruce and other dense coniferous forests than on the climate, for it is much milder near Napa than at that elevation in the Sierra Nevadas; and, toward the North, they frequent valleys. I have seen them near the Columbia River at all seasons, usually inhabiting the dense forests. They, however, come out on the borders of prairies and openings when not molested, especially in the early morning." They never pack in large flocks like the pinnated and sharp-tailed grouse.

I have no doubt but that the blue-grouse will rapidly become wilder as it becomes more of an object of pursuit; and, as the large game is exterminated from the western forests, these birds will afford as much sport as the ruffed-grouse does today when fairly abundant in the eastern woods. Indeed, I am informed by sportsmen who have shot them recently in the West, that they furnish great sport, and there are localities where they can be brought to the same bag with the ruffed-grouse, the spruce-grouse, and the Mongolian pheasant, which is now quite abundant.

Roosevelt found many grouse in the woods of the Coeur d'Aléne mountains. "Of three kinds—blue, spruce, and ruffed—and these," he says, "varied our diet and also furnished us with some sport with our rifles, as we always shot them in rivalry. That is, each would take a shot in turn, aiming at the head of the bird as it perched motionless on the limb of a tree, or stopped for a second while running along the ground; then, if he missed, or hit the bird anywhere but in the head, the other scored one and took the shot. The resulting tally was a good test of comparative skill."



GROUSE-SHOOTING IN A MOUNTAIN MEADOW.

There are three varieties of the blue-grouse mentioned in the books. One form, the sooty-grouse, is said to be darker than the common dusky-grouse, and to have a narrower band on the tail. Elliot says: "In its habit it does not differ from the preceding species and haunts the dense spruce and fir forests, taking refuge in the dark foliage of the trees and remaining motionless. I have met with this bird on the very summit of the mountains in the Coast Range, above the forest, and where the only covering was stunted trees and small clumps of bushes. I was riding along such a place one morning, my horse picking his way carefully over the rocks and broken ground, and winding in and out among the low trees and bushes that stood plentifully about, when I saw a covey of about eight individuals of this grouse upon the ground a short distance in front of me. Although they saw me and my horse very well, and must have heard his iron shoes striking the stones long before we came into view, they were not at all alarmed but continued to feed, running about without the least concern. Dismounting, I advanced toward them, when they drew together and looked at me in a wondering kind of a way, and one or two flew up into a low tree that was near by, but no effort was made to escape. Drawing near, I fired at one as he rose, when the rest took wing, but flew only a short distance before alighting, and then began to run. They took wing again as I advanced, when I secured two more, and,

with little trouble, and, being obliged to walk but a short distance, I shot all but one, and he, finding the place altogether unhealthy, flew down the mountain-side, after I had fired several times at his companions, and escaped."

Richardson's grouse is to my eye exactly the same in color as the dusky-grouse, but it is said to lack the distinct gray band on the tip of the tail, or to have it very slightly indicated. The habitat of these three birds is not well defined. "Wherever the habitat of the Richardson's grouse," says Elliot, "overlaps that of either of its relatives, such as in Wyoming and Idaho, the present bird, intergrades with them." I have no doubt in the Big Horn country I shot the Richardson grouse, and that in the Uintahs, and in other places, I may have shot the other forms, but they were all blue-grouse to me; and, after passing through the hands of our cook, they came to the board steaming hot and were equally white, tender, juicy, and delicious. In the Big Horn country we had a Russian named Redski as our cook. I am quite sure that Redski's little white bull-dog, which devoured the bones thrown to him from the table, heeded not whether he ate the *Dendragapus obscurus*, the *Dendragapus fuliginosus*, or the *Dendragapus obscurus Richardsonii*.

1. THE DUSKY-GROUSE (*Dendragapus obscurus*). Hab.—Rocky Mountains, from southern Idaho, Montana, and western South Dakota to New Mexico and Arizona. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 297. General color slatey-blue; forehead dull rufous; back of head brownish black; upper parts blackish brown vermiculated with lighter brown and gray, sometimes coarsely mottled with the same, especially on the wings, which are occasionally blotched with black; scapulars streaked with white along the shafts to the tips; throat white, mottled with black; lower parts slate-gray, mottled with brown on the flanks; legs covered to the toes. Length, about twenty inches. Weight, about three pounds. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B., p. 93. The blue-grouse is unmistakable. The only other bird which might be taken for it is the Canada-grouse, but that bird is smaller than the prairie-hen, and the blue-grouse weighs one-third more than the latter bird.

2. THE SOOTY-GROUSE (*Dendragapus obscurus fuliginosus*). Hab.—Coast Range of Mountains, from California eastward to Nevada, western Idaho to northern Alaska. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 297 a.

3. RICHARDSON'S GROUSE (*Dendragapus obscurus Richardsonii*). Hab.—Eastern slopes of Rocky Mountains, from northern Wyoming and southeastern Idaho to the Laird River, latitude 61° in British North America. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 297 b. Very similar to the dusky-grouse. Said to have a differently shaped tail, which is much more square and without any distinct terminal gray band, merely an edging of pale brown.

Elliot, Gal. Gam. B., 99. Aud., iv, 446; B. B. & R., N. A. B., iii, 422; Coues, Key, 233; Coues, B. N. W., 395; Coop. i, 526; Sp. Rd. and Gun, 659; Roosevelt, Ranch Life & H. Trail, 183; Elliot, Gal. G. and B., 90, *et seq.*

The portrait of the Blue-Grouse on its nest was made by Mr. Carlin for *Recreation*.



THE PTARMIGAN

WE woz sittin' free—like you an' me—in our camp on the Stanislow,
Round a roarin' fire of brush and briar, stirred up by a pitch-pine bough,
And Jones of Yolo had finished his solo on Bilson's prospectin' pan,
And we all woz gay until Jefferson Clay kem in with a Klondike man.

* * *

He talked of snows and of whisky wot froze in the solidest kind of chunk,
Which it took just a pound to go fairly around when the boys had a first-class drunk.
And of pork that was drilled and with dynamite filled before it would yield to a blow,
For things will be strange when thermometers range to sixty degrees below.

* * *

—Bret Harte.



THE ptarmigan are distinctly the grouse-of-the-snow, inhabiting the Arctic regions and the high snow-clad peaks of the Western mountains. They differ from the other American grouse in size, being somewhat smaller; and they all, for their protection, turn white in winter. There are four species and four sub-species of this grouse. The willow-ptarmigan and the rock-ptarmigan are natives of the Arctic regions, from Newfoundland and Hudson Bay west to Alaska. The white-tailed ptarmigan inhabits the snowy peaks of the Rocky Mountains, from latitude 39° north into British America, and west to the cascades of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Welsh's ptarmigan is the ptarmigan of Newfoundland. The sub-species are referred to in the notes.

The sportsman who climbs the highest peaks of the Rocky Mountains, far above the timber-line, in pursuit of ptarmigan, usually obtains a magnificent view,—ofttimes nothing more. I once made the trip to the mountain-tops especially for ptarmigan. We set out with a pack outfit, made our camp near the highest edge of the timber, and climbed the rest of the way afoot. It was in the month of August, but there was much snow on the mountains. The view was sublime. A vast number of snow-clad peaks gleamed and sparkled in the sun and cast beautiful purple shadows. We enjoyed the novelty of a mid-summer snowball fight, but did not see a bird. As the sun went down, the sky became yellow and the shadows on the mountain-side deepened. We retraced our steps to the camp in the timber, and the next day returned to the valley below. A number of sportsmen of my acquaintance have had the same experience. As Dr. Grinnell says: "Their tracks in the snow and their feathers are more often seen than the birds themselves."

Mr. J. A. Allen writes that they were quite common in Colorado, on the snowfields of the higher parts of the mountains, and that in winter they descend into the timbered lands, where a great number are killed by the miners for food. The white-tailed ptarmigan is so named from its tail remaining white at all seasons, the tail in the other species being black.

The ptarmigan are the smallest of the grouse, being about the size of the spruce-, or Canada-grouse. They have the heaviest feathering on legs and feet, the feathers extending to the toes, and causing the feet to resemble somewhat those of the hare, and this, of course, suggested the technical name, *Logopus*, or hare-foot.

In winter the white-tailed ptarmigan is entirely snow white; in summer the plumage is variegated



IN SPRING PLUMAGE.

with gray and tawny, in finely undulated pattern, much of the under-parts, however, and wings remaining white. It shows little or nothing of the rich brown and chocolate colors that the other ptarmigan display.

Mr. Trippe, in an interesting communication prepared for Dr. Coues from his observations on Clear Creek, Colorado, says: "The white-tailed ptarmigan is a very abundant bird on the main range, living entirely above the timber-line the year round, except during the severest part of winter, when it descends into the

timber for shelter and food, occasionally straggling as low as 10,000 feet. It begins to change color about the middle of March, when a few specks of blackish-brown begin to appear in the plumage of the oldest males; but the change is very slow, and it is late in April before there is much black visible, and it is the close of May or early in June before the summer plumage is perfect. The nest—which is almost always placed on or near the summit of a ridge or spur, many hundred feet above timber-line—is merely a depression in the ground, lined with a few straws, and white feathers from the mother's breast. The eggs are eight in number. While on her nest the bird is very tame. Once, while walking near the summit of the range, I chanced to look down and saw a ptarmigan in the grass, at my very feet; at the next step I should have trodden upon her. Seeing that she did not appear frightened, I sat down, gently stroked her on the back, and finally, putting both hands beneath her, raised her gently off the nest and set her down on the grass, while she scolded and pecked at my hands like a setting-hen; and, on being released, merely flew off a few yards and settled on a rock, from which she watched me until I had gone away.

"The flesh is light colored, though not as white as that of the gray-grouse, to which it is usually considered inferior for the table. When seldom molested it is very tame, and I was informed that it was frequently killed with sticks. But when persistently pursued, it soon becomes wild and leaves the range of a shotgun with surprising quickness. After hunting several large flocks for three or four days, they grew so shy that it was difficult to approach within gunshot, although at first they had been comparatively tame. Nimble of foot, the ptarmigan frequently prefers to run away on the approach of danger, rather than

take wing, running over the rocks and leaping from point to point with great agility, stopping every little while to look at the object of alarm. I sometimes chased them half a mile or more over the rocky, craggy ridges of the main range, without being able to get within gunshot, or force them to take wing.

"The flight of the ptarmigan is strong, rapid, and at times sustained for a considerable distance, though usually they fly but a few hundred yards before alighting. It resembles that of the prairie-hen, consisting of rapid flappings of the wings, alternating with the sailing flight of the latter bird. The note is a loud



ABOVE THE TIMBER-LINE.

cackle, somewhat like the prairie-hen, and, when uttered by a large flock together, reminds one of the confused murmur and gabble of a flock of shore-birds about to take wing. It is a gregarious bird, associating in flocks throughout the year, except in the breeding-season. The different broods gather together as soon as they are nearly grown, forming large flocks, sometimes of a hundred or more. The colors of the bird closely resemble those of the surrounding objects at all seasons of the year. In its summer plumage of speckled black and gray it is very difficult to detect while sitting motionless among the gray and lichen-covered rocks. The ptarmigan is apparently well aware of this and often squats and remains quiet while one is walking past, trusting to its resemblance to the surrounding rocks to escape observation. So perfect is this resemblance that, sometimes on seeing one alight at a certain spot and withdrawing my eyes from it a moment, I have been unable to find it again, although I knew the exact place where it sat, until a movement on the part of the bird betrayed its position. On being pursued it will dive into the snow and reappear at a considerable distance."

The late summer and early autumn is the season for shooting these grouse. The birds of one family are then found together, and, like the other grouse, they are more easily approached, and their flesh is in fine condition for the table. The birds descend the mountains in the winter with the snow.

With the mountain-goat, the ptarmigan is one of the trophies of those sportsmen who isolate themselves from even camp-fire comforts, and who are willing alone to climb the lofty peaks and cross the

barren ridges that form the mighty Continental divide, and he who has filled his bag with ptarmigan has, in this country, at least, nothing left in the bird line to tempt further his ambitious ardor.

In Alaska, as the reader will observe further on, the Arctic ptarmigan are found on the level plains, and are shot like prairie-hens. I find no mention of dogs being used, but, as the birds must be aware of their ability to conceal themselves, I see no reason why they should not be used to advantage in Alaska at least. Setters, with their heavy coats of hair, would be preferable. The white-ptarmigan, or willow-grouse, as it is sometimes called, inhabits Arctic America, and is quite abundant in Alaska. In summer the general coloring is a deep cin-



IN WINTER PLUMAGE.

namon brown, the whole upper parts (except the wings) paler, more ashy brown, broadly and closely barred with black. In winter the ptarmigan is white, except the tail, which is black with a white tip. Hutchins says the males assume their red-colored plumage as soon as the rocks and eminences become bare, at which time they are in the habit of standing on large stones, calling in a loud, croaking voice. They pack in September and October.

These ptarmigan are said to make regular paths in the snow among the willows along the river, and the Indians take advantage of this habit and snare them, taking them by hundreds. They have a swift, well-sustained flight, similar to that of other grouse, and dive from the air into the snow, going clear under it and for some distance. In summer they resemble the ground and rocks, and in winter the snow, so that it is difficult at all times to see them.

Another Arctic ptarmigan is the rock-ptarmigan. This bird is found in the far north only, and is said to be quite abundant at Hudson Bay. It is white in winter, excepting the black feathers of the tail. Lieutenant George E. McConnell, senior lieutenant in command of the U. S. Revenue cutter Bear, writing recently (1897), gives a most entertaining account of ptarmigan-shooting in Alaska. He says:

"An Esquimaux hunter told me that around Corwin Mines, where we were to touch for a fresh supply of coal, game of all kinds was plentiful. For seal, walrus, and polar bear I cared nothing just then; but, when the hunter told of myriads of wild fowl, including eider-duck—an excellent table-bird, by the way, though much better known for its down—and the rare emperor-goose, Arctic foxes, and the ptarmigan, I looked forward to some good sport with the shotgun. We pushed on to the north as soon as possible, but were delayed by an immense ice-floe, which obstructed our course for several days. Our time was not entirely lost, for I succeeded in getting several good negatives of ice-subjects. Finally Corwin Mines was reached, and I decided to try at once for some ptarmigan-shooting over the plains lying just beyond the cliffs that lined the coast.

"The ptarmigan, owing to its habitat, is almost unknown to sportsmen. It is the Arctic representative of the grouse family. In the summer months it closely resembles the ruffed-grouse of our own country; its chief distinction is that the legs and toes are covered with short feathers, and the cock does not strut and spread his tail like the ruffed-grouse. At the beginning of the winter months a complete change takes place; the brown coat is discarded for a more appropriate one of pure white, and by this change of color to match the predominating shade of the landscape, it more easily avoids

detection. There being no forests or coverts, the rocky country would otherwise afford little shelter. One species, the willow-ptarmigan, is found as far south as Colorado, but it confines itself strictly to the mountains, and lives on the highest peaks, where the weather is perpetually cold; but it is in Alaska that the bird is found in all his glory.

"At daybreak next morning, or rather at the time when the day was breaking in our own country, we started—a little party of five, each provided with all the requisites of a well-equipped hunter, for the Government is kind enough to furnish vessels sent into northern waters with a good line of shotguns. Now, a great many people have an idea that a sailor is a poor hand with a shotgun, but the result of the hunt will show for itself. Our party consisted of the junior lieutenant, the ship's surgeon, myself, and two Esquimaux, who were to act as guides.

"We were rowed ashore in the ship's boat and landed at the foot of some enormous hills that rise abruptly from the edge of the water. Immediately in front of us was a narrow gorge extending through the hills to the plains beyond. Picking our way carefully along the pass, we came, after several hours of hard climbing, to the plain, which was overgrown with moss, brightened here and there with little patches



THE WHITE GOAT.

of wild flowers, thrusting their heads above the cold ground as if in mute appeal to be transferred to a warmer place. It seemed remarkable that flowers could thrive in that cold climate, for by digging into the shallow soil, ice was found at a depth of six or eight inches. Yet at that season they bloom in beautiful profusion, as if to cheer the heart of the lonely seaman whose path leads him into that desolate waste. As we passed over the rough and barren plateau where the ptarmigan lived, I could not help comparing the surroundings with the country I had been accustomed to shoot ruffed-grouse over in New York State, and note the vast difference in the methods required to get a shot. Instead of a well-trained dog and a thick covert, we were obliged to depend entirely on our well-trained natives to discover



IN THE PTARMIGAN COUNTRY.

the game, while the scene was a monotonous, treeless plain, with huge boulders scattered here and there. I was beginning to wonder whether we had not made a mistake, and stepped off at an arctic desert where the game, if there was any, was frozen solid, like almost everything else; but suddenly the sharp-sighted natives uttered low, warning cries, and, dropping on their stomachs, pointed to a pile of rocks about fifty yards ahead. We looked in the direction indicated, but it was sometime before I could make out anything among the lichens. Then the indistinct forms of two or three ptarmigan came into view. The birds were feeding and entirely unconscious of our presence. They did not remain so long, however, for before I could unsling my gun, which I had been carrying over my shoulder, they flushed and would have escaped had it not been for the quickness of the surgeon. Bang! Bang! went his gun, and two birds fell, the victims of as pretty a double as I ever saw.

“Finding that there were a few birds to be had, I decided not to be taken by surprise again, so loaded my gun and prepared it for instant use; and it was not long before an opportunity came to use



IN BRUSH, SEDGE AND STUBBLE

BY
DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON.

PART V.

MDCCCXCVIII
THE SPORTSMANS SOCIETY.
CINCINNATI.





IN BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY, NO. 5.

THE WILD TURKEY.



SEA-DUCK SHOOTING

BY E. POTTHAST

“The sea-ducks are shot over decoys from
a blind or battery.”





it, for the birds were plentiful. I enjoyed the sport as keenly as one possibly could, whose freedom for months had been limited to the narrow confines of a steamer. I strained my eyes as eagerly as did the natives, and when I did get a chance for a shot, success thrilled and a miss disappointed me as much as it did the savage guides. Sometimes, when a pile of lichen-covered rocks was approached, no birds could be seen; but, on advancing with gun at ready, a flash of white and the whir of wings



THE MOUNTAIN TRAIL.

would send the gun to my shoulder in an instant; then, following the line of flight, the report would ring out, and the eager human retriever, his countenance expanding into a grin, would spring forward after the fallen game.

“The natives acted in the capacity of dogs, pointing and retrieving in a manner that would have put many an old bird-dog to shame. They were so keen-sighted that not even the scent of a pointer could have detected a covey with more accuracy. They warned us of game long before we could see it,

and, by uttering a short, sharp cry, would flush the birds for us. The natives carried no guns, not even knowing how to use them. The Esquimaux have nothing but their traps, but their ingenuity is great when it comes to devising means for catching birds. With nothing but a few pieces of bone and a thong of walrus-hide, they will contrive snares which seldom fail to catch and hold small game. Remembering our long, weary tramp that morning, we reluctantly turned our steps shoreward, but, at the suggestion of one of the guides, we took a short cut through a smaller gully than that of the morning.

"On our return to Corwin Mines, we took another trip after small game, and were even more successful than on the first hunt. One would suppose that game in such an isolated place would be extremely tame, but this is not the case. We found the birds to be as watchful and cunning as in many parts of the United States. Most of the wild fowl spend the winter far to the south, and are, therefore, well acquainted with the reports of guns and the sight of hunters. But this did not account for the wariness of the ptarmigan; and quite the reverse is usually true of other members of the grouse family. The ruffed-grouse, for instance, in new countries, is very tame indeed, until frequently disturbed. To be sure, the ptarmigan on the plain were continually on the alert for their natural enemies, the fox, and the big white owl—which, like themselves, changes its plumage with the season. Then, too, I was impressed with the belief that the birds would not have been so wild if we had not been accompanied by the natives."

I have quoted from Lieutenant McConnell somewhat at length because of the excellence of the article, and for the reason that I have found but little on the subject, and the magazine containing the article is now out of print. Most writers, as the Lieutenant observes, who have written of hunting in that territory, have dealt almost entirely with big game, merely touching on what is of considerable interest to the average sportsman—the small-game shooting. The other ptarmigan are all boreal birds.

1. THE WILLOW PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus lagopus*) (Linn.) Hab.—Arctic regions. In America south to Sitka and the British Provinces. Breeding range restricted to the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, mainly north of the 55° N. lat. Accidental in New England (Bangor, Me., and Essex Co., Mass.). Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, No. 301; B., 467, 470; R., 474; C., 568.

Male—Summer plumage.—Top of head, back of neck, and entire upper parts barred with chestnut ochreous, and black; scapulars and tertials like the back; primaries, white, with dark brown shafts; secondaries, with white shafts; throat, sides of neck, and breast, light chestnut, darkest on lower part of breast, barred everywhere except on throat with black; flanks, dark brown, barred and mottled with black; entire rest of under parts, with legs and toes, pure white; tail black, extreme base and tip white; bill black. Length, 14 inches; wing, 7¾ inches; tail, 5½ inches.

Winter plumage—Entire body pure white; tail, black, tipped with white. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 142.

2. ALLEN'S PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus lagopus Alleni*). Hab.—Newfoundland. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 301a.

3. THE ROCK PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus rupestris* (Gmel)). Hab.—Arctic America (except the northern extremity) from Alaska to Labrador and the Gulf of St. Lawrence; portions of Greenland; Aleutian Islands. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 302; B., 468; R., 475; C., 569.

This bird is of the same size and very similar to the Willow Ptarmigan. Head, neck, and upper parts gray, barred with black, and irregular bars on the head, back of neck, upper back, and scapulars, and black blotches on upper part of back; wings like the back; primaries and outer secondaries white, with brownish black shafts on the primaries; upper tail coverts, gray, barred with black, and occasionally rusty; some feathers with white tips; under parts and legs pure white. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 153.

4. REINHARDT'S PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus rupestris Reinhardti*). Hab.—Greenland, western shores of Cumberland Gulf, and northerly extremity of Labrador. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 302a; very similar in color and markings to *L. rupestris*. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B., 155.

5. NELSON'S PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus rupestris Nelsoni*). Hab.—In Alaska and some adjacent Aleutian Islands. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 302b. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 159.

6. TURNER'S PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus rupestris atkhensis*). (Turner.) Hab.—Atkha, one of the Aleutian Islands. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 302c. Said to be somewhat larger than the other ptarmigan. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 161.

7. WELCH'S PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus Welchi*). Hab.—Newfoundland. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 303. A dark-grayish bird, with a bluish tinge to the plumage, which has been likened to the color of the sooty-grouse, and all the feathers are dotted with blackish-white, like the others in winter. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 157.

8. THE WHITE-TAILED PTARMIGAN (*Lagopus leucurus*). Hab.—Alpine summits of the mountains of western North America from New Mexico to Liard River, British America, west on the highest ranges of Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 304; B., 469; R., 476; C., 570. Elliot, Gam. B. N. A., 167 *et seq.*

General color in summer, grayish buff irregularly barred and vermiculated with black on the upper parts; breast barred with black and amber brown. Length, 12½ inches, wing, 6½ inches; white in winter.

In addition to the above from the Check List, Elliot mentions two other ptarmigan: The Townsend's Ptarmigan are inhabitants of the Aleutian Islands of Kyska and Adak, and Evermann's Ptarmigan from the Island of Attu. They are, however, all grouse from the sportsman's point of view—gray and brown in summer, and white in winter. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 163, 165; Coues, B. N. W., 425 *et seq.*; Nutt. Man. 11 (1834) 612; Aud., Ornith. Biog. v, 200; B. B. & R., N. A. B., 111, 464; Sh. Up. M. & Str., 192; Sp. Rd. & Gun. 661.



THE TURKEYS AND THE PHEASANTS



THE wild turkeys of America closely resemble the pheasants of Asia. The wild turkey is strictly indigenous to the Western Hemisphere, and it is, therefore, a singular misnomer to call him turkey, for this name, as Dr. Lewis says, would seem to imply that the bird was a native of the East rather than the New World. The wild turkey was introduced into England during the reign of Henry VIII, and it has been suggested that trading vessels, on their return voyages from the Orient, stopping at the Spanish ports, may have brought home, as “mere fancy fowls,” some of these birds lately arrived from the Western World. And thus, from the mere circumstance of arriving in England through the medium of Turkish traders, these birds were naturally presumed to have been brought from the most remote regions

that the vessels visited. Buffon “cleared away the mist” and proclaimed it a fowl indigenous to the wilds of America alone.

There are, in addition to the common wild turkey, three sub-species—the Mexican turkey, the Florida wild turkey, and the Rio Grande turkey. These turkeys are all much alike, and may be regarded as geographical varieties. The range of the common wild turkey is given as from the Chesapeake to the western plains, and south to the Gulf. The Mexican bird inhabits the Southwestern States from western Texas to Arizona, and south over the tablelands of Mexico. The Florida turkey dwells in southern Florida, and the Rio Grande turkey in the lower Rio Grande country. The measurements and weights of the sub-species do not differ much from the common variety, and there is but little difference in the pattern and color.

The turkeys are the largest of our land game-birds. Their weight is about the same as that of the domestic turkeys, the wild gobblers being somewhat heavier and the hens lighter. The wild birds are similar in color and marking to the tame birds, but far handsomer, the iridescent metallic reflections of green and copper bronze being wonderfully beautiful. The gobbler presents a magnificent appearance as he struts and gobbles in the sun, and Elliot describes him as a bird of graceful and easy carriage, alert to every sound, and the finest and noblest game-bird in the world.

The pheasants of Asia were long ago introduced into England, but there were, until quite recently, no pheasants in America. It was through the efforts of Judge Denny, while consul-general at Shanghai, that these birds were first introduced into the United States. The first experiment, in 1881, was a failure, but the next year he was more successful, and the birds, having been closely protected by legislation for a number of years, became very abundant and are now a common game-bird on the Pacific Coast.

Mr. Sturgis Green, of Portland, says: "All Oregon and southern Washington, between the Cascade and Coast Ranges, is full of pheasants, and they have already invaded the country beyond. They have also been introduced into New York, Ohio, and some of the other states, and are an object of pursuit on the preserves of the eastern shooting-clubs.





THE WILD TURKEY

“On the top
Of yon magnolia the loud turkey's voice
Is heralding the dawn.”



WILD turkeys were formerly distributed throughout the woodlands of the United States. They are forest-loving birds, and are extremely wild and shy. Like the ruffed-grouse they are great wanderers, and require vast tracts of woodland for their preservation. With the clearing of the land, therefore, they have entirely disappeared in the Eastern and Central States, with the exception of certain localities, where large tracts of woodland remain, and are only common throughout the West and South. There are a few remaining in the Black-Swamp country of north-western Ohio and the forests in the adjacent counties.

Baines gives sixteen pounds for gobblers and eight for hens as a fair average weight. And it is not uncommon to find gobblers that will pull the scales to twenty pounds, and sometimes, but rarely, to twenty-five, -six, or -seven. He states that he killed two in one day that weighed twenty-five and twenty-seven pounds, respectively. A friend in the Indian Territory reported killing one that tipped the beam at twenty-eight. Prof. J. L. Smith, of Texas, told him he had killed one that weighed even thirty pounds.

The wild turkey has the same strut and gobble as the tame fowl. The "thunder-like" sound when strutting was formerly supposed to be made by scraping the wings on the ground, but the turkey struts as loudly in a tree. Old hunters claim they can distinguish the fat gobblers from the lean, and the old from the young, by the sound of the gobble. On this point Mr. Baines, who has had much experience with turkeys, says: "If the hunter hears several gobblers and wishes to select the fattest, let him go after the one whose gobble is the heaviest and most muffled. Beware of the one with the



TURKEY SIGNS.

tenor voice, especially if he cuts his gobble short." Audubon believed that the common barnyard turkey is descended from the wild turkey, but James Tudor thinks this is an error, and that our domestic turkey is descended from the turkey of Mexico (*Meleagris Mexicana*), which is a coarser fowl than the wild turkey of America; but it is easily tamed, while the American turkey, like the Indian, is untamable. They can, he says, be made quite gentle when hatched by a barnyard fowl and fed from the hand; but such is their propensity to ramble that they stray off and become wild again.

The turkey, before forming the acquaintance of the white man, was a tame and almost stupid bird. Washington Irving repeatedly speaks, in his "Tour on the Prairie," of meeting with them in great

numbers. "Some," he says, "scampered off as fast as their long legs could carry them; others fluttered up into the trees, where they remained, with outstretched necks, gazing at us." At one camp, in a beautiful grove of elms, they had scarcely dismounted when a universal firing of rifles took place upon a large flock of turkeys scattered about the grove, which proved to be a favorite roosting-place for these simple birds. They flew to the trees and sat perched upon the branches, stretching out their long necks and gazing in stupid astonishment until eighteen of them were shot down. In the height of the carnage word was brought that there were four buffaloes in a neighboring meadow, and the turkeys were abandoned for nobler game. Prescott, in his "Conquest of Mexico," refers to the turkeys as having been domesticated by the Aztecs.

All of the earlier writers comment upon the tameness and stupidity of the turkey; but such are not his attributes to-day. He has been quick to learn that man is his enemy, and he is now as difficult to find and to stalk as the most timid deer. Mr. Lanier says: "You must shun a telltale bunch of dead leaves as if it held the plague; every footstep is half consciously considered, that it may not fall on a dried twig, and that it may be muffled in any friendly bank of moss or sodden wooden punk, where, perhaps, a peckish bear has torn a stump into bits, with an eye to grubs. The foot settles softly in its fall, the weight to be shifted easily from heel to toe if a concealed stick gives the alarm, and leaves the track as quietly. But these precautions must be felt, for the eye is roving restlessly ahead and to either side, taking note of every leaf that falls, suspecting every half-hidden remnant of last year's fire, as far as it can penetrate over the brown leaves and through the brownish red flags and green laurel bushes. A half mile of this requires a half hour." Again, he says: "To fairly stalk and outwit this feathered monarch of the forests, is the most thrilling, as it is the most difficult achievement of the man who loves the open air, the trees, and a gun."

Each to his taste. I have hunted the red deer of the East, the black- and white-tails of the Rocky Mountains, and the antelope on the plains. I have shot elk and buffalo, and came very near, on one occasion, to getting a grizzly (or perhaps, from his point of view, he came very near getting me), and, while admitting there is excitement enough in the pursuit of large game, I have not the patience to still hunt or stalk any game in the forest. I have repeatedly shot sharp-tailed grouse when the report of my gun alarmed the buffalo which were grazing within sight. I paid no more attention to them than to cattle on a range. To be sure I had killed some, and we had more meat than we could use, but I preferred the rapid-firing at the birds and the observation of the dogs.

Turkeys are pursued in the West and South, during the gobbling season, with turkey calls made of the wing-bone of a turkey, or the vibration of a leaf placed against the mouth. The sportsman, upon entering a wood, usually in a river-bottom, or adjacent to a swamp, proceeds with the utmost caution and quiet, since the birds are easily alarmed, and stops occasionally to sound the call or gobble. A response indicates the location of the game, and, remaining motionless, the gobble is sounded at intervals until the game approaches within range, when the double-gun is fired at the small flock or single bird, as the case may be.

It is remarkable how expert the turkey-hunters sometimes become in calling, and instances are given of one hunter killing another, firing into the brush at the sound of the gobble. Some sportsmen are as devoted to this sport as others are to deer-stalking. I shot for several seasons with a country sportsman, who had excellent setters and was very fond of quail-shooting; but, upon the first fall of snow, he was continually on the lookout for turkey tracks, and, when once his eye detected the slightest sign, he turned his dogs over to me and we parted company, he to stalk the wary turkey, while I kept to the fields in pursuit of quail. He seemed perfectly satisfied if he succeeded in killing one or two turkeys



CALLING.

in a week; but I used to say to him that I preferred killing a brace of quail right and left, or front and back, when fairly pointed by the dogs, to the capture of the largest turkey in the woods. My friend, however, was also fond of quietly stalking deer, and seemed to exult in their capture after a long ramble through the woods, and took pride in his ability to approach turkeys and deer within shooting range. I must admit that great skill is required in such pursuit, but I have never cared enough about it thoroughly to master this science of woodcraft.

A familiar but most unsportsmanlike method of taking turkeys is to shoot them on moonlight nights, when roosting in the trees. When the roosting-place is discovered, the hunters station themselves under the trees, and, when the birds come to roost, shoot them from the branches. This may be well enough if the camp is in need of meat; but, for my part, I consider this most uninteresting and reprehensible gunning, like the shooting of wild fowl after they have gone to sleep on the water, and such practices should be everywhere, as they are in some places, forbidden by law.

The sportsman who kills a half dozen turkeys in a week is having great success. He is far more likely to get one, or two, or none, and to do this he will fire but a few more shots, as the birds are shot usually when at rest, and when running or flying are large and easy marks. I have not the patience for such pursuit or such slow gunning. On one occasion I devoted two entire days to the pursuit of turkeys in the Ozark Mountains. The birds were reported quite abundant, and I had as a companion a local sportsman quite familiar with the woods; but we did not find a single bird, and at the end of the second day I gave it up and took to the fields for quail. We were informed that in our absence a small flock of turkeys had run through the principal street of the village and that one was killed by a boy with a stone.

Mr. James Gordon says that in the South the turkeys are sometimes stalked in the night season, the hunter carrying a cow-bell on his arm; and, since the birds are used to cattle feeding and the sound of the bell, they are easily approached and shot on the roost. Tame decoys, also, have been used with some success in the South, instead of the turkey-call. Turkeys are taken easily with traps made of rails, square in form, with a brush roof. An entrance on one side is dug in the ground under the lower rail, with an easy descent to the aperture. Corn is scattered about in the ditch, and the turkeys, feeding upon it, walk into the inclined passage, under a broad plank across the opening on the inside of the trap. When once within the enclosure they raise their heads, and, when alarmed, or upon discovering their confinement, they run about the pen at its sides, crossing the ditch or entrance on the board, or endeavor to escape through the roof. The entire flock or brood is often taken in this manner.

Turkeys in the West and South often are shot with the rifle, but it requires excellent marksmanship to hit them in the head; the ball often badly mutilates the flesh when fired through the body. A pointer is sometimes used to locate and tree the birds, but he must be an extremely careful and experienced dog, and his use seems to me to be of doubtful expediency. Captain C. J. Crane, of the army, however, says that the son of the post commander, a boy of about sixteen years, killed eight turkeys out of a flock in one day, his pointer treeing the birds, and adds that, hunting the same day, he did well to kill two birds; but he had no dog. One day, the Captain says, while hunting with a party from Ft. Sill, on Deep Red Creek, he killed nine birds, all but one having been flushed and shot like quails. The turkeys can fly only a short distance at a time. Each succeeding flight is shorter, and they soon tire out when running. The same writer says the Indians of Arizona sometimes run down and catch turkeys in the mountains, on foot.

For the first hour after leaving the roost in the morning turkeys are very busy eating, and during that time the hunter can approach them more easily than in the middle of the day, when they lie up in the bushes and underbrush and are difficult to find.

In some localities, where the woods adjoin an open prairie country, turkeys are pursued with horse and hounds. Mr. Roosevelt, in his "Hunting Trips of a Ranchman," describes this sport as witnessed by his brother. He says: "After a long flight the turkey came down and began running, when the hounds closed in and forced him up again. The second flight was not so long, and, as the bird sailed near the ground, one after another the dogs made a spring for him until he was finally cut down."

This wild riding after hounds in the fenceless, park-like country of the Far West, is a most exhilarating and exciting sport. I have ridden after the hounds in pursuit of antelope and jack-rabbits, but never after turkey. It will be observed that, as an object of pursuit with the shot-gun, the wild turkey can hardly be classed as a game-bird. But he is a large, magnificent, beautiful bird of fine flavor, and I know many sportsmen who are very fond of pursuing him with the rifle. It usually is the case, if the sportsman elects to take a rifle, he wishes he had taken the gun, and, if the gun is selected as the weapon, the chances presented are provokingly those where the rifle alone could be used.



AN ACCIDENTAL MEETING.

Mr. Baines advocates the use of a three-barrel gun weighing nine or ten pounds, with ten-gauge shot barrels, one loaded with No. 6 and the other with No. 00, and a rifle taking the 38-55 cartridge. At all distances under forty yards, the small shot should be fired at the necks of the turkeys, and the large shot at their bodies at all distances from forty to sixty yards. At distances beyond these, the rifle-barrel should be used.

Forester says that wild turkeys never, so far as he has heard or read, lie close enough to be stood by pointers or setters, or to be shot on the wing. I have, however, several times, when in the pursuit of other game, seen the dogs handsomely stand on turkeys; but not often enough to make it worth while to go in pursuit of them.

On one occasion, when shooting in western Ohio, with Mr. Frank McCullough, of Sidney, my setter came to a point in an open stubble where the weeds were quite high. Upon moving up we flushed a very large turkey gobbler, which started (but a few feet ahead of the dog) to run, and then to fly. My companion waited for me to shoot until the bird was almost out of range, and then killed it and apologized for so doing, saying he had hoped I would shoot as I had raised my gun. But I thought the bird a tame one and had no intention of taking the shot. Upon another occasion, when shooting woodcock, with Dr. Louis Worthington, in the vicinity of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, we came upon a turkey which arose before the dogs just as they came to a point. On still another occasion I had a most remarkable point in the corner of a cornfield when shooting quail near the upper end of the Laramie Reservoir (Ohio). As the dog was quite steady I signaled my companions—the artists Duveneck and Farny—with a wave of my hand, and, as they came up, two turkeys, a flock of quail, and a rabbit all went out together. I shot one of the turkeys, but he pitched far out into a most impenetrable swamp and was not recovered. My friends, in the excitement, missed the rabbit as he went by, with four barrels. That particular corner is referred to to this day as the “barnyard.”

For turkey-shooting, the sportsman must now go as far west as the Indian Territory, or south to Texas, and I doubt much if the birds are anywhere abundant or tame. My brother recently found a few in the vicinity of Fort McIntosh, on the Rio Grande, when deer-shooting.

Turkeys, in my opinion, should not be shot in the gobbling season—the spring of the year, and the open season should be confined to the months of November and December. The birds are decreasing so rapidly that a short season of not over two months should be adopted, while the trapping of these birds should, of course, at all times be prohibited.

There is a charm at any time in a ramble through the forest. In the early autumn the American forest is, beyond comparison, the most beautiful in all the world. The colored leaves, with the sunlight streaming through, have been compared to the stained glass in the windows of old cathedrals, and the carpet of leaves, the gray and green lichens and mosses on rocks and fallen tree trunks, delight the eye of an artist. The true sportsman is, of course, a lover of Nature, and in the solitude of the forest delights to be far removed from the noise and bustle of the town. Whether the object of pursuit be the timid deer, the wild turkey, the woodland-grouse, or even the squirrel, makes but little difference. The woodland stroll, after all, is the thing. The one objection I have to this forest-shooting is that the setters must be left at home, unless, of course, the object of pursuit be the woodcock or the grouse-of-the-woods.

1. THE WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo*). Hab.—United States from Chesapeake Bay to the Gulf Coast, and west to the Plains, along wooded river valleys; formerly north to southern Maine, southern Ontario, and up the Missouri River to North Dakota. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 310; B., 457; R., 470a; C., 554.

General plumage, brilliant metallic, gold-green bronze, and red reflections, each feather tipped with a band of velvety black; secondaries bronzy green, barred with whitish; primaries, black barred with white, the bars reaching the shafts; rump black, feathers glossed with dark metallic purple; upper tail coverts, dark chestnut, with metallic red reflections, and barred with black; tail feathers, chestnut, barred and vermiculated with black. Head and neck, naked red, a long bunch of coarse, stiff black bristles is suspended from center of breast; legs red, spurred; bill red. Total length, about four feet; wing, twenty-one inches; tail, nineteen inches; weight from twelve to nearly forty pounds. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 176.

2. MEXICAN TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo Mexicana*). Hab.—Southwestern United States, from western Texas to Arizona; south over the tablelands of Mexico. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 310a; B., 458; R., 470; C., 553.

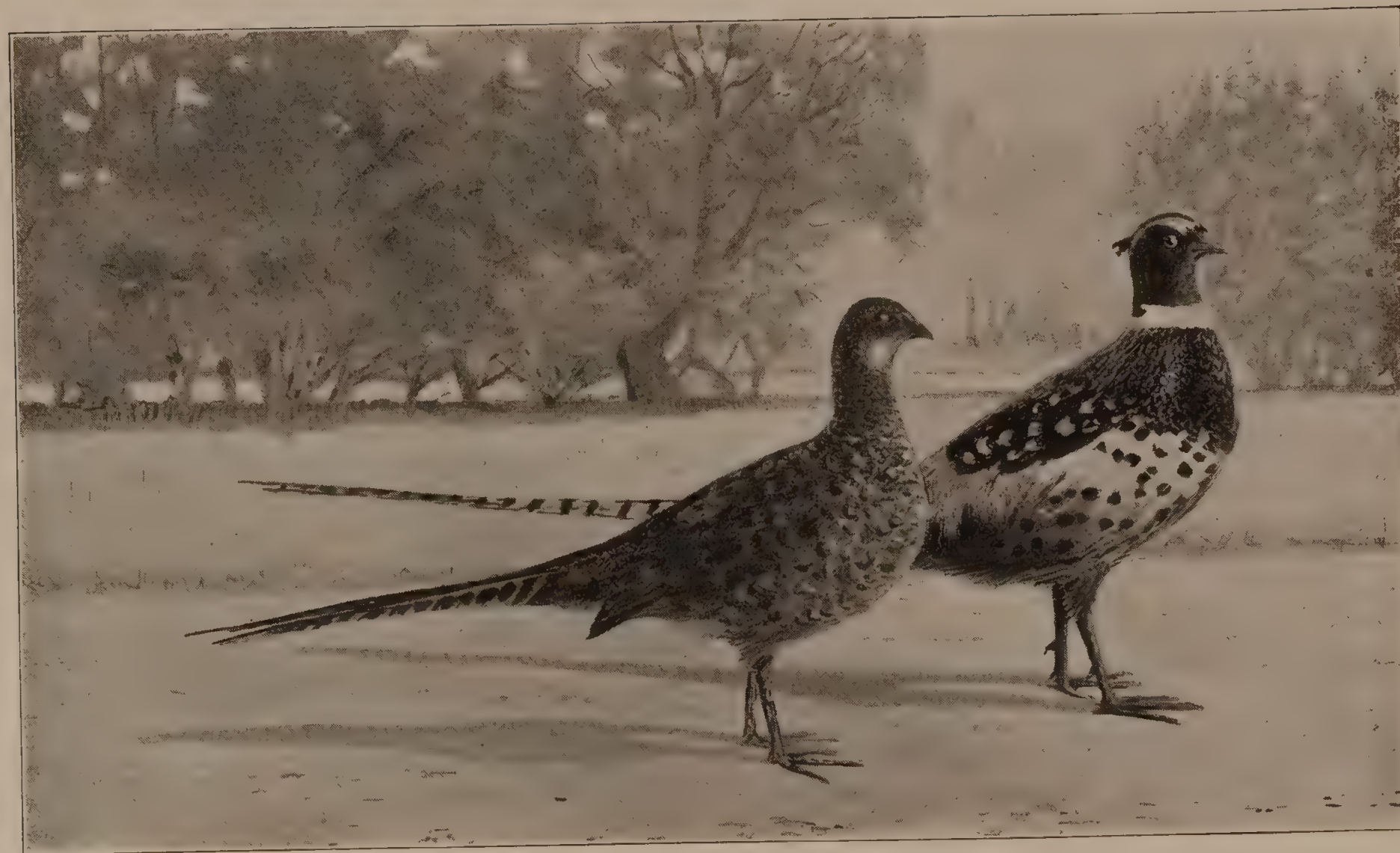
The principal differences exhibited are the upper tail coverts, which are broadly tipped with white, barred posteriorly by a band of black, the rest of the feathers being metallic bronze. Measurements and weights vary considerably among individuals, and those given for the common wild turkey will answer for this one also. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 185.

3. FLORIDA WILD TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo osceola*). Hab.—Southern Florida. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 310*b*; B., 457; R., 470*a*; C., 554. Dimensions and pattern are similar to common wild turkey. Said by Elliot to be much darker in the general hue of the plumage. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 179.

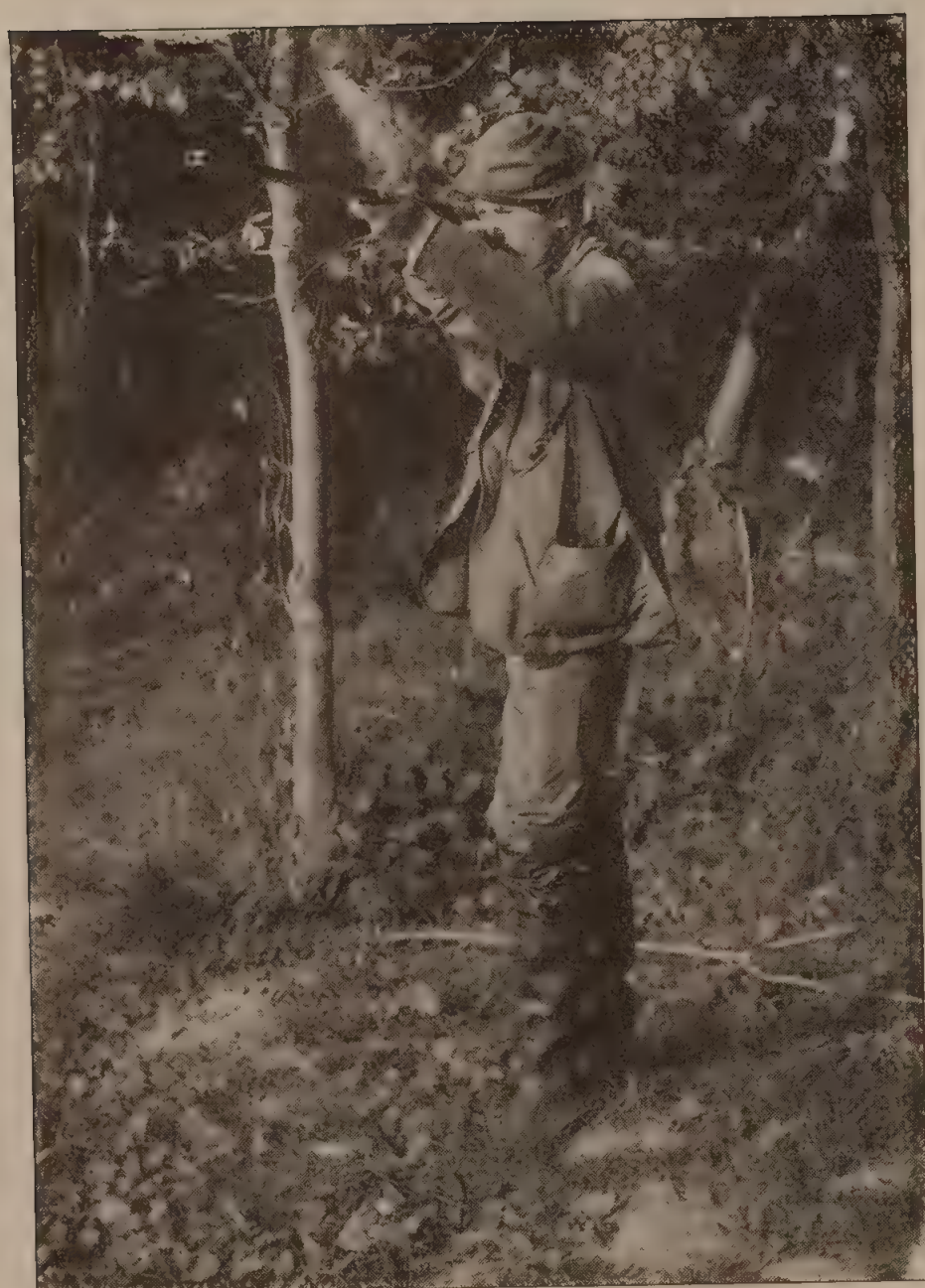
4. RIO GRANDE TURKEY (*Meleagris gallopavo Ellioti*). Hab.—Lowlands of southern Texas and northeastern Mexico. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 310*c*; B., 458; R., 470; C., 353.

Similar to the common wild turkey. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. A., 181; Aud. Ornith. Biog., i, 1; Nutt. Mass., i, 630; B. B. & R., N. A. B., iii, 404; Coues' Key, 232; Coop. B. Cal., i, 523; Bates, Gam. B. N. A., 123, p. 112; James Gordon, in Sp. Rd. & Gun, 760; Forester, Field Sports, vol. i, p. 301; Roosevelt, H. Tr. Ranchman, p. 100; Coues, B. N. W., 391, and authorities cited; Lewis, Am. Sportsman, 118; Sh. Up. Mar. & Str., 343. See, also, The Auk, January, 1899, for recent change in the Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List.





THE PHEASANTS



THERE are no pheasants indigenous to North America. The ruffed-grouse often, as I have observed, is miscalled the pheasant in the West and South, but he is not related to the true pheasants. The grouse all have feathered legs, some to the toes, but none of the pheasants have feathered legs. The pheasants have long tails and are birds of gorgeous plumage, their feathers being bright reds, yellows, and greens, reflecting gold, silver, and bronze. The grouse all are gray and brown, with black and dark-brown markings,—excepting the ptarmigan, which turn white in winter, and properly belong to that class of birds having protective colors which render them inconspicuous, in order that they may escape their enemies.

As the pheasants are not native Americans, there is nothing about them in our ornithologies. Even in the recent book by Elliot on our game birds, they are not mentioned. But they have become an object of pursuit in the Pacific States, and are being introduced rapidly into many of the Eastern States, and in many places are an especial object of propagation and protection by the State authorities. Much has been written recently for the daily press and for the magazines about the pheasant.

There are many varieties of pheasant—the Mongolian, the golden, the silver, the firebacked, the bar-tail, the Impeyan, and others. The golden pheasant, decked in scarlet and gold, is one of the

handsomest,—but not so handsome, according to Professor Dury, as the Impeyan. “While the golden pheasant,” he says, “is arrayed in glossy feathers of red and gold, it cannot compare with the magnificent Impeyan, with its coat of metallic green, gold, and copper bronzes.”

The pheasants introduced into Ohio are protected by law. The Ohio hatchery this year made a distribution of birds to the various counties, and we Buckeyes look forward to good pheasant-shooting in 1903. The pheasants are said to be very prolific and to raise large broods. They are as hardy as quail, or more so, and stand a severe winter well. They are as large as a grouse and excellent on the table.



PHEASANT-SHOOTING.

The Mongolian pheasant, or ring-neck, is the pheasant which has been introduced into America, and is now, in many places, shot as one of our own game birds. The male pheasant is a beautiful bird, with magnificent plumage, which almost rivals that of the pea-fowl in beauty. The colors are red, yellow, and black, with gold and bronze reflections. The head is of an iridescent blue or purple, reflecting green, and about the neck is a pure white band, which suggested the name “ring-neck.” The female is not so handsome, the markings being yellowish and gray-brown.

Mr. G. M. Miller, of Eugene, Oregon, says: “The pheasant gives out a stronger scent than the blue-grouse or the prairie-chicken, and lies better to the dog. During the open season—September 1 to December 1—an hour’s drive in any direction from Eugene will bring one to the shooting-grounds. The law limits the shooter to twenty birds each day; but this number is often killed in a few hours.” They cannot be tamed or domesticated. After months of captivity, they are as wild as when first taken.

They are "game" first, last, and all the time. The flesh of the Mongolian pheasant is almost as white as that of the domestic chicken, and has a pronounced gamy flavor.

The Ohio State Pheasantry is located at Van Wert. There is a large and successful private pheas-



THE MONGOLIAN PHEASANT.

antry at Pleasant Ridge, quite near Cincinnati, and there are also many fine specimens in the Cincinnati Zoological Gardens. The birds on this page and on the following page were raised in a large inclosure at the Pleasant Ridge Pheasantry.



IN BRUSH, SEDGE AND STUBBLE

BY
DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON.

PART VI.

MDCCCXCVIII
THE SPORTSMANS SOCIETY.
CINCINNATI.





IN BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY, No. 6.

BOB WHITE AND THE CALIFORNIA MOUNTAIN PARTRIDGE.



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING ON THE SNOW

By D. W. HUNTINGTON

“But in late December, if the snow is on the ground, quail do not frequent the open fields.”



The pheasants are divided by Tegetmeier into two classes: Pheasants adapted for the covert, and pheasants adapted for the aviary. The former are—the common pheasant of England, the Chinese or Mongolian pheasant, the Japanese pheasant, Sœmmerring's pheasant, and Reeves's pheasant. The first



THE ENGLISH PHEASANT.

two of these are the pheasants which interest American sportsmen. The English pheasant has almost lost the white collar, or ring about its neck. The pheasants shown in the illustration are the birds raised and sold in America as English pheasants, but they have, no doubt, a decided trace of the Mongolian blood.

Tegetmeier says: "The pure Chinese is a bird of bold flight, rising through the covert with great quickness, and then pursuing a swift, straight course. It is, unquestionably, a most ornamental addition to our game-birds, being valuable, not only for the beauty of its plumage, but also for the delicacy of its flesh. The breed is, however, kept in a state of absolute purity with some difficulty, as the males are apt to wander to fresh fields and pastures new. Hence crosses between it and the common species are very prevalent; these constitute what are usually called ring-necked pheasants. These cross-bred birds are perfectly fertile, not only with either pure race, but also *inter se*. They are, however, variable in plumage, the amount of white in the neck varying from four or five feathers to a nearly complete circle, and the feathers on the flanks being intermediate between the beautiful spotted buff of the pure Chinese and the dark color of the common bird."

Mr. Stevenson says: "The common pheasant crosses readily with its kindred species, and to so great an extent has this been carried in Norfolk, that, except in the wholly unpreserved districts, it is difficult at the present time to find a perfect specimen of the old English type (*P. Colchicus*) without some traces, however slight, of the ring-neck, and other marked features of the Chinese pheasant (*P. Torquatus*), and in many localities of the Japanese (*P. Versicolor*). In looking over a large number of pheasants from different coverts, as I have frequently done of late years in our fish-market, I have noticed every shade of difference, from the nearly pure-bred ring-neck, with its buff-colored flanks and rich tints of lavender and green on the wing- and tail-coverts, to the common pheasant, in its brilliant but less varied plumage, with but one feather in its glossy neck, just tipped with a speck of white."

Verner de Guise, of Mahwah, New Jersey, in a paper prepared for "Forest and Stream," says: "The Japanese and Reeves pheasants are not commonly used for shooting, and the pure old English bird is but little known in the States, though the chosen variety throughout the length and breadth of Europe. In the States the hybrid English ring-necked pheasants and the Chinese alone are propagated for the stocking of preserves, and everywhere in the northern, central, and eastern territories, the former has rightly taken first place. I will not now enter upon the consideration of the points that cause the Chinese bird to be less suitable for sport than the English ring-necked pheasant, as I want to commence, without further delay, my remarks on their proper management as game.

"I have already remarked that not every place will be naturally found to be or can be made a fitting abode for pheasants. They have their likes and dislikes the same as everything else in this world, and their choice of a favored spot is often unaccountable, and not amenable to any human explanation, and *vice versa*. They are essentially a woodland bird, but there must be plenty of arable land in their vicinity, where they can feed on the fallen grain and scratch in the stubble for insects. In the day time, especially early in the morning; and again, as the shadows lengthen of an evening, they will be found roaming over the fields in their search for food. At these times, if disturbed, they will wing their flight back to their leafy shelter, or 'scoot' for the protection of the nearest hedge. It is useless to put out pheasants where their natural food is not abundant, for they will not remain there to starve. They will not inhabit large forests any more than open expanses. Much, of course, can be done to render a very unlikely place

entirely acceptable to them,—in the former case, by clearing open spaces, or forming glades, where crops of buckwheat or millet can be grown for their delectation and support. If, on the contrary, the land is bare of any trees, spinneys must be planted to hold the birds, affording warmth in the winter and shade in the summer, besides roosting-places at night. They will at once make their home in and never leave any wooded hollow, where cedars and other evergreen trees abound, through whose depths runs a never-failing stream, and which lies amid fields of grass and grain. Such is an ideal harborage for them, where their every want will be supplied. * * * In trying to set up a stock of pheasants no efforts will be fully repaid, no success will be perfect, unless a determined and continued onslaught is



PHEASANT COVERT.

made on their foes, furred and feathered. The brook, so necessary for their comfort, is the lurking place of the mink. The grateful shade of the trees harbors hawks and owls, and many a brood will be left motherless, and many a hen will be bereft of her young, unless all such depredators be ruthlessly exterminated."

I have not, as yet, had the opportunity of shooting these handsome birds, but can testify to their good table qualities. The so-called English bird is somewhat heavier, but the Chinese seems to me to have a more gamy flavor. They are both fine table birds.

1. THE CHINESE PHEASANT, MONGOLIAN PHEASANT, RING-NECK PHEASANT (*Phasianus Torquatus*). This is the pheasant introduced into Oregon, and now quite common on the Pacific Coast. It is being introduced into many of the eastern, central, and southern States. It is very similar to the common pheasant, but smaller. It is easily distinguished by the broad, pure white collar about the neck of the male. This, of course, suggested the name *Torquatus*, derived from torquis, a chain or collar worn around the neck.

The male has the forehead deep green; crown of the head, fawn-color, glossed with green; over each eye, a conspicuous streak of buffy white; the naked papillated skin of the orbits and the sides of the face, deep scarlet or blood-red, interspersed beneath the eye with a series of very minute black feathers; horn-like tufts on each side of the head; throat and neck, rich deep, shining green, with violet reflections; near the base of the neck, a conspicuous collar of shining white feathers, narrow before and behind, and broadly dilated at the sides; the feathers at the back of the neck, black,

with a narrow mark of white down the center of the back portion, and a large lengthened mark of ochreous yellow within the edge of each web near the tip; the feathers of back and scapularies, black at the base with a streak of white in the middle, then buff, surrounded with a distinct narrow band of black, to which succeeds an outer fringe of chestnut; feathers of the back, black, with numerous zigzag and crescentic marks of buffy white; lower part of the back, rump, and upper tail coverts, light green of various shades, passing into bluish-gray at the sides, below which is a mark of rufous; breast feathers, indented at the tip, of a rich reddish chestnut, with purple reflections, and each bordered with black; flanks, fine buff, with a large angular spot of beautiful violet at the tip; center of the abdomen, black, with violet reflections; under tail coverts, reddish chestnut; wing coverts, silver-gray; wings, brown—the primaries with light shafts, and crossed with narrow bars of light buff, the secondaries similar, but not so regularly marked as the primaries; tail feathers, olive, fringed with different shades of reddish violet, and crossed at regular intervals with broad, conspicuous black bands, passing into reddish brown on the sides of the basal portion of the six central feathers; bill, yellowish horn color; irides, yellow; feet, grayish-white. Tegetmeier, Pheasants, p. 96; Cites Gould, "The Birds of Asia."

Female—Very similar to, but more reddish brown, than Common Pheasant.

2. THE COMMON PHEASANT—ENGLISH PHEASANT (*Phasianus colchicus*). Generally distributed in England and throughout Europe, and now being introduced into many parts of the United States.

Male—Very similar to the Chinese bird in color and markings, but with little or no white on the neck. A somewhat heavier bird. Length to end of tail, 34 inches; extent of wings, 32 inches.

Female—Similar in pattern to the Chinese bird, but in color more grayish-yellow. See Macgillvray's description, cited by Tegetmeier, Pheasants, p. 19.

The other pheasants adapted for the covert are:

3. THE JAPANESE PHEASANT (*Phasianus Versicolor*).

4. SÖEMMERING'S PHEASANT (*Phasianus Sömmerringii*).

5. REEVES'S PHEASANT (*Phasianus Reevesii*).

Pheasants, Their Nat. Hist., etc., Tegetmeier, p. 89, *et seq.*; Verner de Guise, in a Rep. Oh. St. Fish and Game, etc., Comm. 1896, p. 25; Hon. S. H. Green, "The Chinese Pheasant," *Ib.* p. 30.

Verner de Guise, writing of the management of pheasants, says, climate, soil, and other conditions vary so greatly according to locality, that what may be a necessity in one case will be unnecessary and even detrimental in another. One thing is certain, however, that pheasants have come to this country to stay, their introduction and propagation having long ago passed the experimental stage.





THE AMERICAN PARTRIDGES

"A picture that no painter has the colorin' to mock —
When the frost is on the pumpkin and the fodder's in the shock."
—James Whitcomb Riley.



THERE are in North America eight partridges, and five sub-species. The most familiar and widely distributed bird is, of course, the bird commonly known as the quail, in the central and western States, and as the partridge, in New England and the southern States. This bird, "Bob White," has three species: The Bob White, the Grayson's Bob White, and the masked Bob White. The former inhabits southern Canada and the eastern United States from southern Maine to the south Atlantic and Gulf States, and west to Dakota, eastern Kansas, and Texas. The other two forms inhabit southern Arizona and Mexico. The Bob White has two sub-species: The Florida Bob White and the Texan Bob White.

The remaining partridges are: The Mountain Partridge, with one sub-species—the Plumed Partridge; the Scaled Partridge, with its sub-species—the Chestnut-bellied Scaled Partridge; the California Partridge, with one sub-species—the Valley Partridge; Gambel's Partridge; and the Massena Partridge.

All of the partridges, excepting the Bob White, have comparatively limited ranges, and are distinctly birds of the far West and Southwest. Two species are found on the Pacific Coast, and the rest in Mexico and the Rio Grande country, Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Texas. The range of each is given with accuracy in the notes.

There have been many attempts to add to this list, but until the variety-makers find a bird which does not whistle "Bob White," which has not the same pattern and markings, which does, in fact, differ in some material habit of nesting, rearing its young, feeding, flying, lying well to the dog, or equally well on the plate, the sportsman may well consider the species and sub-species of Bob White as one and the same.

The same may be said of the other species. The mountain and the plumed partridges are much alike in appearance and habits. The two scaled quail are exactly alike, excepting that one has a patch of chestnut-colored feathers on the under part. The California partridge and the so-called valley partridge are also so nearly alike as to be easily mistaken the one for the other. From the sportsman's point of view, therefore, we may say there are six distinct partridges: "Bob White," the familiar game-bird of the farm, the mountain partridge, and the valley partridge of the Pacific Coast; and the southwestern partridges—the Gambel's partridge, the scaled partridge, and the Massena partridge.

Of these in their order. But before proceeding I may remark that "Bob White" is of more importance to the sportsman than all the others put together. He lies well to the dog, is a swift flyer, tests to the utmost the sportsman's skill in the open and in cover, seldom takes to the trees, is of convenient size for the game-pocket, and is excellent for the table. These attributes place "Bob White" easily first among the game-birds of America.





BOB WHITE

“And the quail is piping loud from
The buckwheat where he fed.”



BOB WHITE is the game-bird of the farm. When not too much pursued he thrives in civilization, and, as the country is opened up by the settlers in the West, this partridge goes with them.

According to the earlier ornithologists, this bird is neither quail nor partridge. The quail proper of Europe is much smaller, and is migratory; and the partridges of Europe are larger, and have other ornithological differences. The technical name of our bird in Forester's time was *ortix*; but, as he observes, we cannot well speak of shooting *ortiges*, and must, therefore, call our birds either quail or partridge. He was inclined to the former name, since it was the word in most general use. But he observes that he cannot, for a moment, hesitate in saying that “American quail” is the correct name for the *ortix virginiana*. This bird, however, is in habit, size, and appearance, more like the European partridge.

During the nesting season the male whistles continually from stump and fence-rail, and his notes resemble the words “Bob White.” Alfred Mayer (referring to the fact that country folk generally call the birds Bob White) suggests, as a way out of this difficulty of name, that we call the birds Bob White. But it occurs to me that it is as bad form and as unsportsmanlike to speak of shooting *Mr. Robert White* as it is to talk of shooting *ortiges*.

In the Check List of the American Ornithological Union this bird is placed in the sub-family *perdicinæ*, partridges. It is, therefore, now well settled that the bird is a partridge. All that remains to be said on the subject is that sportsmen will, no doubt, continue to go quail-shooting in the north, and west, and partridge-shooting in Virginia and the south.

The partridges pair early in the spring, build their nests usually in May, and the cock-bird is said to sit part of the time on the nest. Throughout most of the day he whistles his cheery notes. As I write these lines, under the shade of an elm on the banks of the Licking, I hear the call "Bob White!



THE EGGS OF BOB WHITE.—ACTUAL SIZE.

Bob White!" from two or three directions across the river, and another cock is whistling from the hillside just back of the house—a sure sign of an abundance of birds and good shooting in this part of Kentucky next autumn.

Mrs. Partridge builds her nest on the ground, and usually lays from twelve to fifteen eggs, sometimes more. The young "Bob White," immediately upon leaving the egg, has the most marvelous ability to hide, and is precocious in the extreme. Dury says it picks at food before it is clear of the shell. I am indebted to him for the photograph of the eggs here reproduced. In sending it he says:

"Some years ago, in Clermont County, Ohio, I watched a nest of nine eggs that were nearly out in hopes of getting the freshly-hatched chicks for preservation. The nest was near the house, and in a rather open meadow, hidden in a tuft of grass. I looked at the nest in the evening and saw that one of the eggs was slightly cut around the larger end. At daylight next morning I went to the nest, but, to my dismay, all had hatched and gone. When we approached the nest the mother fluttered away, beating her wings on the ground as though badly wounded. Knowing well her ruse to entice us from the young, I paid no attention to her. My friend and I got down on our knees and began a minute search for the

tiny chicks that had been clear of the shell but a short time. Such wonderful power to hide I have never seen. With our eyes within a few inches of a bird we could not see it, although the ground was almost bare. By working over the surface with our fingers, first pulling up every blade of grass, we could feel the soft, fluffy plumage. After a long search we succeeded in getting nine birds, the entire contents of the nest. I am sure if this nest had been located in a less exposed place, or if the birds had gotten a few minutes start of us, we never would have seen one of them again. The nest was located in a shallow depression in the ground, bordered with thin grass. It contained nine eggs, the shells of seven of which I saved, and they are represented in the photograph. The mother bird had picked and cut the shell and membrane in a circle three-quarters around the larger end, leaving the piece like a lid with a hinge to it, as shown in the picture."

I have seen nothing in the ornithologies as to this habit of the bird opening the egg with mathematical precision, leaving each larger end of the shell on a hinge. Mr. Dury remarked that he presumed that I was more interested in the birds when somewhat older (which is quite true), but I am sure my readers will agree with me that his account of the beginning of the game is most entertaining.



A PROPER SIZED BAG.

Mr. Armory R. Starr, in an excellent statistical paper on the partridge, says he prepared numerous questions about Bob Whites, which he had printed in circular form and sent out to several hundred sportsmen in the United States and British possessions to obtain the opinions of practical sportsmen as to these partridges. Two hundred and seventy-six sportsmen responded, many leaving one or more of the questions unanswered. The summary indicated that the number reared in an average brood is thirteen. One hundred and twenty-eight who answered said that two broods are frequently reared by a pair of birds in one season, while eighty-eight deny it. My own opinion is that, if the first covey is destroyed the birds nest again; and, sometimes, rear a second brood when the first is not destroyed.

Dr. Coues says: "I find no record of the quail in New England beyond Massachusetts, and it does not go much further north. In Minnesota it is abundant in the southern portions of the State, and appears

to be spreading with the advance of the settlements, like the pinnated-grouse. I found no indication of its presence along the Red River, or anywhere in North Dakota. Along the Missouri River it is abundant up to Fort Randall, where I have enjoyed as fine quail-shooting as I have found anywhere; and, according to Dr. Hayden, it has followed up the course of the river to the White River. In this region, according to my observation, they are strictly confined to the wooded and brushy portions of the river bottoms, which form an interrupted series of natural 'preserves,' in every way adapted to the shelter of the bird, and the affording of a supply of food. Even in this rigorous climate, where the thermometer falls every winter to 20° or 30° below zero, the birds show no disposition to migrate, and generally succeed in braving such severe cold, although I have authentic information of instances in which a whole covey has been found frozen to death, huddled together in the vain attempt to preserve their warmth. At Fort Randall, a place where the river flows nearly due east, I observed that the quail were all on the north bank, although the other afforded equally attractive resorts; this may be accounted for by a suggestion of Captain Hartley's, that they choose the sunny side of the river, the south side being overshadowed by the bold bluffs."

I saw no quail when grouse-shooting in North Dakota, and doubt if they could stand the winters there. There is no doubt, however, that, with the cultivation of the land, the quail are spreading toward the north and west. They have been introduced with some success into the Salt Lake Valley, and into Colorado and California. The colors of the Florida variety are said to be darker, and the black markings heavier, and the colors of the Texas variety are paler, the prevailing shade being rather gray than brown.

Most sportsmen will agree with me that the pursuit of birds, which lie well to the dog, is superior to the shooting of wild-fowl and waders over decoys. The pleasure of observing well-trained setters or pointers is added to the pleasure of shooting at a flying mark, and there is an exhilaration in pursuit not found in ambush. In a recent book, "Citizen Bird," the author says: "If anyone should ask you which are the most famous American game-birds, you may answer, without hesitation, 'Bob White, ruffed-grouse, and woodcock.'" It will be observed that this partridge heads this list of three.

The legal season for partridge-shooting was formerly, in most States, from the first of October until the end of February, but, as the birds became fewer in number, the legal season was, from time to time, shortened, until now, in the Central States, it is but a month or six weeks in duration. A uniform law, making the open season throughout the States from November 1 to January 1, would, in my opinion, be exactly right. The birds are strong on the wing by the first of November, and there is but little snow before the first of the year.

In the autumn the coveys may be found feeding in the stubble and corn-fields early in the day, and when flushed they fly to some adjacent cover. A covey may be found, day after day, in the same part of the field, and they usually fly to the same cover, often crossing, in their flight, the same rail in the fence.

A friend, with whom I shot many seasons, and who lived adjacent to, and was quite familiar with, our shooting-ground, used to take advantage of this habit of the partridge. When the dogs pointed he walked ahead some distance, a little to the left of the line of flight, and, when I put up the birds, he



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING IN NEW ENGLAND.

had a side-shot at them as they passed, and often killed three or four, and sometimes five, with his two barrels. By this maneuver we continually made the better scores in shooting against my companion from the city accompanied by another local gunner. They had better dogs than ours, and one, a red and white setter, was one of the best dogs I ever saw in the field. I made an offer for him, and succeeded in getting him two years later, and I have owned but one better dog.

A statement has found a place in the books that these partridges are sometimes, and in some places, migratory. Audubon, I believe, first mentioned this, and Herbert cites him, and Alfred Mayer says: "It is true that Bob White is partly migratory in his habits," and "during his travels it would be useless to hunt for him, for he then runs with great rapidity before the dog, and will not take wing."

None of these writers mention their having ever met the bird on his migrations, and the hearsay evidence of the earlier ornithologist seems to be the foundation for the repeated statement. I have shot for many years in the particular locality where the partridges were said to be migratory, have shot at hundreds of coveys, and have conversed with many sportsmen and market-gunners of wide experience, and I have never seen or heard of a migratory partridge. On the contrary, I have found the same coveys in the same locality throughout the season, and their descendants there in succeeding years until the race was exterminated or the character of the fields changed.

As this bird is our best all-around game-bird, it follows that partridge-shooting is our best sport. I am aware that many are wedded to the pursuit of wild-fowl; and one writer, Hammond, prefers the pursuit of the ruffed-grouse. The woodcock, by some, is prized more highly, but they are seldom found in sufficient numbers for a day's shooting, and are more often taken while in the pursuit of other game.

Partridge-shooting properly begins with the end of October. With the first heavy frosts the forests are gorgeous in color, flaming with vermillion and lake, Naples yellow, ochre, sienna, and many tints of brown. The network is on the grass, and the frost in the air, and the expectation of sport is as wine and music to the nerves of the sportsmen. His setters galloping ahead delight his eye. Entering the stubble, the dogs are cast off to right and left, and, hunting against the wind, their heads are held high and their pace is rapid. At the first scent of game they go more slowly, and, as one draws cautiously up to a point, the other backs him instantly. Approaching, the sportsman puts up the birds, which arise with a loud and startling whirr discomfiting to beginners. The partridge seems to be under full headway when but a few feet from the ground, and in a second or two is out of range. It requires excellent marksmanship to make a double shot at these swiftly-flying marks, and a good sportsman is he who kills one-half his birds.

As I have observed, the partridges at once fly to the nearest cover, and there, well scattered, the dogs point them one by one. Among the forest trees and undergrowth, by prostrate moss-covered logs, in fallen tree-trops and briars, the shooting is more difficult, and a good shot may take but three or four birds from a covey before they entirely escape him. Mr. Alfred Mayer was informed by Mr. H. K. B. Davis (who, he says, is the best wing-shot he ever hunted with) that the average is a little over three

birds brought to bag from each covey flushed. Mr. Davis kept a record for several years, of the number of coveys found each day and the number of birds taken from each. Upon reading this some years ago I was inclined to think the number stated much too small. But since I have noted often the number of coveys seen in a day, and, upon counting the bag at night, I have found the statement not far wrong. A most interesting fact, according to the sportsmen who replied to Mr. Starr's questions, is that the average number of coveys found in a day by an average brace of dogs, is nine, out of which an average shot



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING IN CORN.

bags twenty birds, killing 53 per cent of his shots. This makes the average killed from a covey less than that indicated by Mr. Davis. The number of coveys—nine—would not be too many for favored localities, but that number is now seldom found in the eastern States in a day. I have, once or twice, killed every bird in a covey, but I have more often missed them on the rise and been unable again to find them in an impenetrable thicket.

Most writers note the fact that partridges, when they first alight, do not give forth any scent, and Forester advises not following them immediately, and gives incidents of excellent dogs being unable to find them. I was once shooting, in one of the central counties of Ohio, with a friend who had an Irish setter of keen nose, while I had the red and white dog above referred to, and a young setter of

much promise. We had gone but a short distance when all the dogs made a point. The birds, when put up, flew across a large stubble-field and settled near a few trees which stood in tall grass near its lower end. We marked them carefully and went to the spot at once. The dogs crossed and recrossed each other, but gave no sign of game. The stubble near the trees was quite thin, and, after stamping about in the grass we were about to give it up, when I discovered a bird on the bare ground and called my friend's attention to it. We ordered the dogs in that direction, and one passed each side of the bird, entirely unaware of its presence. I then put up the bird, and we renewed our search, being convinced there were more on the ground. The dogs, however, could find no more, and we hunted the line of their flight to the end of the field without finding them. We then went on some distance to a spring, where we had a drink and rested a short time, and ate some apples gathered in an orchard by the way. Upon our return I insisted that we again run the dogs over the stubble; but my friend objected to this as a waste of time. He was certain no birds remained in the field; and sat on the fence while I went in with two dogs. I soon had a point, and put up three birds, making a double shot; and, the dogs still holding their point, other birds arose, one after another. My friend came into action on the double-quick, and we had as fine shooting for a few minutes as I have ever had.

There has been much argument as to whether or not the partridges have the power of withholding their scent; whatever the cause, it is undoubtedly true that the dogs often fail to find them for a short time after they alight. Mr. Starr is of the opinion, although to the casual observer it would appear that the partridges have the power of withholding their scent, that this is not the fact. His theory is that when flushed, their rapid motion through the air dissipates the scent, and sometimes they will plunge into thick grass or cover, press themselves closely against the ground, fold their wings tightly to their bodies, and appear hardly to breathe; then, until they move, it is difficult for the dogs to smell them. Be the reason what it may, I am quite sure that the birds are aware that they are more secure after taking flight, and it is often impossible to put them up immediately.

Last autumn I was shooting in southern Illinois with a friend, who had a Llewellyn setter of excellent breeding and much field experience. I had with me my brace—Herbert and Frost—the former the best dog I have ever owned, and the latter of equally good nose, and but little slower in pace. We were hunting through a large field of standing corn, when my friend put up a covey and fired at them. I had already reached the fence, and I marked the birds as they crossed into the woods beyond. While waiting for my friend to come out of the corn, another covey arose from the field a very short distance to my left, flew very quietly, just clearing the top rail of the fence, and settled behind some large logs which formed three sides of a square, the remaining side being shut in by a patch of briars and weeds. They were within gun-shot when they settled, and there could be no doubt as to my having marked them correctly. It was near the middle of the day, and this flock of birds, having finished feeding, made this short flight to break the scent, and dropped into the grass between the logs for their noontime siesta. My companion soon came to the fence, asking if I had marked his birds. We went to them first, and found several in the open woods, but did not put up one-half of the birds in the covey. I then told him I had

a covey near by, and we went to the fallen logs and put all three dogs in the small inclosure, but they failed to find a single bird. It being time for luncheon, we went a short distance away into the woods, seated ourselves upon a moss-covered log, and ate a cold bird, some bread and butter, and a bit of Sweitzer. Then we quietly smoked for a time, as it is useless to hunt partridges in the middle of the day. Here we had a covey within a few hundred yards, marked down to a certainty, and were unable to get a shot at them! After luncheon my friend called attention to the worn appearance of the dogs. They had been hunting hard for several days, and, I consenting, he proceeded to cut up a rabbit and feed them. I am aware that this performance may seem shocking to old sportsmen, but I am inclined to think some of the



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING IN ILLINOIS.

older rules of sportsmanship, like the big doses of the old-time physicians, may well be forgotten by those who have survived. Our dogs certainly hunted well after being fed, and they found and we killed as many partridges as usual. It was a pleasure, too, to see the dogs eat. Returning to the fallen logs, a good part of the covey flew up from the briers with a tremendous whirring, and together we shot but one bird.

At night the partridges sleep in concentric huddles, with their heads out, and on wet and windy mornings they move late. But if the day be fine and the fields dry, they will start to feed at sunrise, as do the chickens. I would advise an earlier start for the sportsman than that proposed by Forester. Last fall, shooting with a friend in Illinois, we were out quite early the first day. It was very cold and growing colder, and somewhat windy. We hunted over excellent ground, in fields where the birds were reported to be abundant, but for two hours we did not see a bird. Upon going over the same ground a day or

two afterwards, starting somewhat later, we found five coveys in the same time. It is possible that we hunted too fast the first day, but I am satisfied we crossed through several fields before the birds had begun to move about, and the dogs were entirely unaware of their presence.

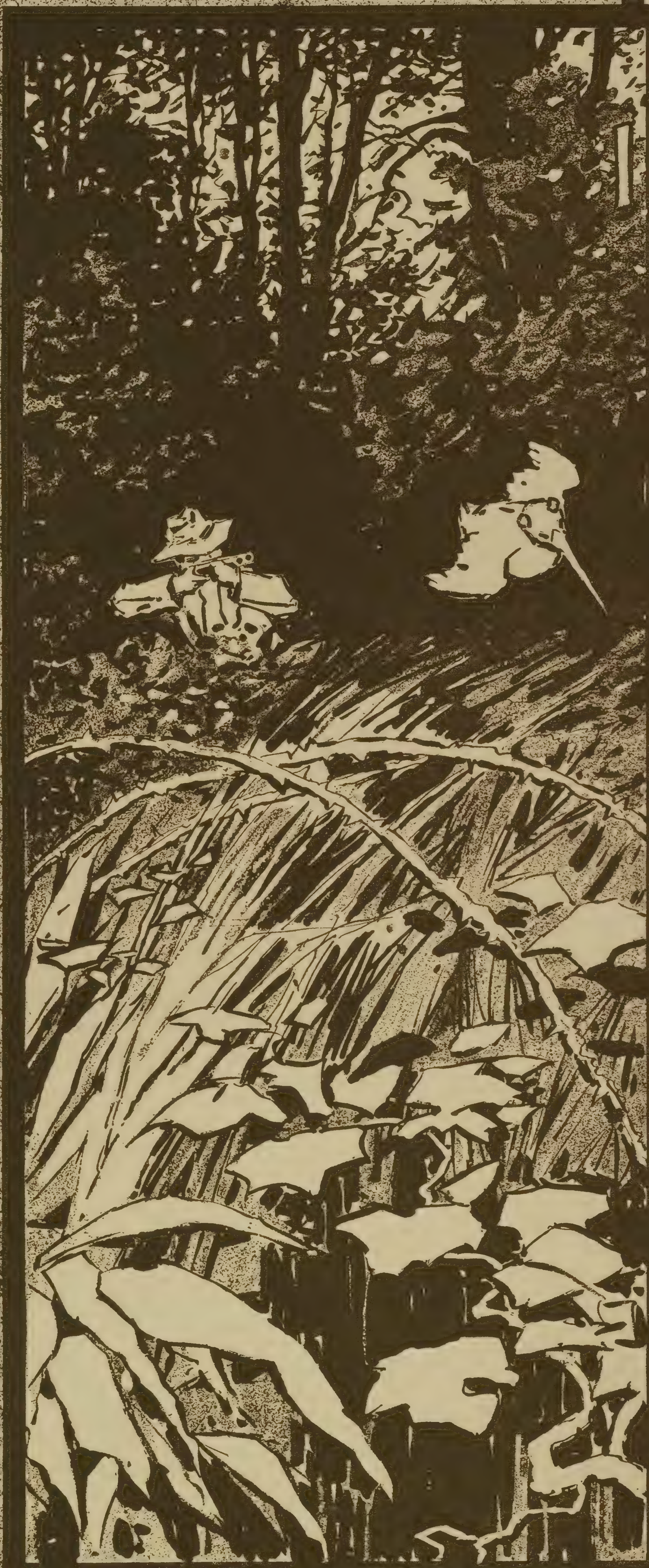
The partridges are especially fond of buckwheat, and the sportsman will do well to seek them in such stubble. Wheat stubble, rag-weed, and corn-fields will all contain birds in a good partridge country; but, on windy, rainy days, they will be found along the fences, in the brier-patches, and in the woods. When there is a heavy snow on the ground, there is no cover in the stubble-fields, and the partridges will be found feeding in the standing corn, or lying up in the woods.

There is but little in the books about partridge- or quail-shooting on the snow, for the reason, I believe, that most sportsmen do not take their dogs out in such weather. But it sometimes happens, when the shooting-ground is at a distance, that we must give up the sport altogether, or make the best of it on the snow. I prepared a paper on this subject which was published in "Outing" (January, 1897), and from this I venture to quote at some length. It will be noticed that I then used the popular name quail, in speaking of the partridge:

"The quail of early October and the quail of late December differ as do the mild days of the Indian summer from the snow-blizzard of winter. In the early autumn the birds lie well to the dog, and often do not fly beyond the limit of the field in which they are found. Their flight is never extended beyond the edge of the nearest cover. But in late December, if the snow is on the ground, quail do not much frequent the open fields, are difficult to find, do not lie well, and extend their flight to great distances. There is a difference, too, in their strength of wing and the rapidity with which they get under way; and the sportsman who kills a brace of these strong winter birds, rising wild, and whirling like bullets through the snow-laden boughs, has done as much as he who killed his even dozen on the stubble in October.

"The evening after Christmas, with a friend, I set out from Cincinnati for a few days' shooting in the Wabash country. I had been shooting early in the autumn on the Illinois side of the river, but, as the legal season had closed in that State, we decided to try the ground opposite, in Indiana. We took three dogs — Dora, an excellent English setter belonging to my friend, and a young brace of mine, of which I had every reason to be proud. One I had named Frost, after the artist, and the other Herbert, after the writer better known to sportsmen as Frank Forester. We had high expectation of sport. The birds were reported as abundant, and we had obtained permission to shoot on the farms.

"As the night train approached Vincennes, I rubbed the frost from the pane and looked out. It was very dark, but there could be no mistake about it—it was snowing, yes, snowing hard! Shortly before daybreak our luggage was thrown down on a narrow platform without a roof, which is designated as a station on the railway map. The ferryman lived close by, and a light in his window indicated that he expected us. At sunrise we had our breakfast, and were ferried over and conducted to the house of a prosperous farmer who had promised to take us in. The snow lay deep on the ground and had drifted against the fences. It was very cold. The sun, however, shone brightly, and we were soon in our shooting-



IN BRUSH, SEDGE AND STUBBLE

BY
DWIGHT W. HUNTINGTON.

PART VII.

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THE SPORTSMANS SOCIETY.
CINCINNATI.





IN BRUSH, SEDGE, AND STUBBLE.

PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDY, No. 7.

THE MASSENA PARTRIDGE, THE CALIFORNIA VALLEY PARTRIDGE, AND THE GAMBEL'S PARTRIDGE.



PARTRIDGE SHOOTING IN CALIFORNIA

BY C. A. FRIES

“The California partridges are swift of foot, and run before the dogs. When well scattered they sometimes lie fairly well.”



jackets and off for the fields. The snow was so deep that it was impossible to distinguish an old stubble from new wheat, and we were certain no birds would be found excepting in the woods, or, possibly, in the standing corn.

"At the suggestion of my friend, who seemed to doubt the steadiness of my young dogs, I tied Frost in the barn, and he howled a protest as we set out with Dora and Herbert. In a narrow strip of corn, just back of the house, we cast off the dogs, and both quickly gave signs of game. Dora soon made a point, and, as my friend fired at a bird which arose wild before her, I observed my puppy (he was ten months old) standing on another, and called my friend's attention to his steadiness. Approaching him,



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING ON THE SNOW.

with a word of caution, I put up the bird and easily killed it going straight away. At the report of the gun another bird whirled up and went over my head, but I was fortunate in stopping that also. The bevy was evidently scattered in the corn, and we put up a few more of them, but they went away wild and none was added to the bag. I was surprised to find the birds scattered so early in the day, but learned at evening that they had been flushed by a man who daily crossed the farm on his way to the saw-mill in the woods beyond.

"Crossing an open field, we entered a large field of standing corn, upwards of half a mile in width, extending from the river to the forest. Here we found four large bevy's, but were unable to do much with them, as two went to the timber on the river-bank, which was full of brush heaps, and two went to a "deadening," a tract of timber a few acres in extent full of fallen trees and briers, where it was difficult to do any good shooting. It was, in fact, almost impossible to put up the birds a second time. They dove into the snow and went under the huge brush-heaps, and our dogs failed to find them. Another friend joined us during the day with his pointer, one of the best bird-finders I ever saw, and we worked hard all day, but at evening we had but a score of birds.

"The next day, with all the dogs, we tried some new ground to the eastward of the house. The man at the mill told us if we would go through the forest we should find several large bevs at the farther edge. He described particularly two thickets extending out into the fields, and a small piece of woods beyond the road, and said we would find birds adjacent to each cover, or probably in it. The sun shone brightly, and every branch and twig gleamed and sparkled under its load of snow. A number of grossbeaks, 'Kentucky cardinals,' flitted from brier to brush-heap, their flaming feathers flashing in the



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING ON THE WABASH.

sun, bright emblems of the health and cheer incident to a frosty morning. I felt that it was good to be out, even though the dogs did not find the game.

"Without much assistance from the dogs we easily found all of the birds which our friend at the mill had described. I discovered the tracks of the first bevy where they had been running about feeding in the corn, and we followed them half-way across the field; then they arose wild before the dogs. Heading for the timber, they flew past us, and we were successful in bringing one down. We marked the birds where they entered the wood, but did not follow them immediately.

"The second bevy we found in the corn, but they arose wild before Dora, although she was extremely careful. Following them to the small woodland, we each shot a bird. The dogs pointed them handsomely, the woods were quite open, and, to be frank, we should have had several more.

"The third bevy arose wild before 'Bert,' as he was hunting out a small thicket at the edge of a corn-field, and, although we gave an hour to it, we failed to find them a second time, and returned to the forest.

"Our dogs were all black, white, and tan. Dora was so closely ticked that when in a brush-heap checkered black and white, it was almost impossible to see her. Frost, with his white body and black ears, was as easily lost against the snow and fallen trees. A large black saddle on Herbert rendered him a little more visible.

"We hunted some time for the birds which we had marked in the wood, and were about to give it up when my friend missed Dora. I had last seen her crossing between some fallen tree-tops, so I went in that direction and spent some time seeking her. At last my friend said, 'I will call her in,' and at the sound of the whistle there was a loud whirring of wings, a shower of snow from a fallen tree-top, and there stood Dora, with head erect, a perfect picture. The distance was too great for a shot."

The partridge flies with extreme rapidity. When he first springs he is rising rapidly, and moving often on a curved line to right or left. Most beginners shoot under and behind their birds. In crossing shots it is absolutely necessary to shoot well ahead. Mayer says: "The velocity of an ounce of No. 8 shot driven with three drams of powder is near to 900 feet per second. In that second a Bob White, if under full headway, will go eighty-eight feet, if we estimate the velocity of his flight so low as only a mile a minute. If he is flying directly across your line of sight and thirty yards off, the shot will take one-tenth of a second to reach that distance, and in one-tenth of a second the bird has gone over eight and eight-tenths feet." I once shot at a black duck flying across the line of sight, and, aiming a little ahead, was much surprised to see his mate, some fifteen feet behind him, fall dead. It taught me a lesson which has much improved my shooting at cross-flying shots. It is a most difficult point for the beginner, and he continues to miss until he can bring himself to shoot well ahead of cross-flying and well over rising birds.

The partridge, as I have observed, is difficult to find, difficult to hit, and, I may add, difficult to kill. He often flies on with his death wound a long distance before falling, and good dogs will often fail to find him when down.



A RABBIT HUNTER.

Two gunners is the proper number for partridge-shooting, and the dogs should be two in number, and owned and handled by one person. When two sportsmen shoot much together they can hunt their dogs alternate days to advantage. The best dogs, in my opinion, are the English setters. I have, of course, seen pointers equally good in the field.

Partridges are more often found at the sides than in the center of fields, and there are certain likely corners, knolls, and depressions, where the birds are most certainly to be found. The observant sportsman who has had much experience with these birds will be able oftentimes to point out the particular spot in a field where they will be put up. I have observed that the partridges are very partial to old deserted cabins and houses, and I always go out of my way to hunt the adjacent field and orchard or garden overgrown with weeds and briers. A friend, with whom I have shot for several seasons, agrees with me that such places are almost sure to harbor a covey.

Partridges are easily alarmed by the human voice, more easily, it has been said, than by the report of a gun. The dog should be handled by means of a whistle, and absolute silence must be maintained when working on a scattered covey. The chief enemies of the partridges are the hawks and the foxes.

I once owned a setter which pointed rabbits, and always indicated their presence by a slight motion of the tail, when on point, and a side glance, which seemed to me to be an appeal for permission to chase the game. I had considerable amusement in making small bets that he had a rabbit when he came to a point in a likely place for partridges, and always won. On one occasion, when shooting in northern Ohio, this dog trailed a covey across a large stubble, and stopped at a stump overgrown with briers in the corner of the field. His point at first indicated birds; but soon there was a slight movement of the tail, and, as I remarked that he had a rabbit, a fine covey of birds took wing, and a large red fox scampered off to the right, until I stopped him with a load of No. 8 shot, fairly cutting his throat.

Upon another occasion, as I came out of a thicket, a marsh hawk flew up from the fence with a partridge in his talons, and as I shot him I saw the partridge drop, and picked up both birds.

I once, towards evening, saw a hawk pounce upon a covey of birds, when all screeched in affright, making a loud noise. A hawk sitting upon a dead tree in a likely field will often indicate the presence of a covey, but it will be difficult to find them and make them take wing until the hawk has been driven away.

The proper gun for partridge-shooting is a light 12- or 16-gauge, loaded with an ounce or an ounce and an eighth of No. 8 shot. Since the birds are shot at close range, the barrels should be cylinder, and 28 or 30 inches in length.

The best day's shooting I ever had was in Ohio several years ago. With two friends and several excellent dogs I made an early start from the country tavern. We had a good team and light wagon. The day was fine—a beautiful, frosty, late Indian summer day, following a light rain. A short distance from town we cast off the dogs in a stubble, and they almost immediately found a covey. We instructed our driver to meet us at a school-house some miles away, at noon, and set out to shoot over as fine a partridge country as there is in America. Large stubble- and corn-fields were bordered by small

woodlands and brier-patches, and traversed by occasional small ravines, overgrown with weeds and wild grasses; and there were ditches with enough water in them for the dogs. We shot four birds from the first covey on the rise, and marked the others into a little thicket well ahead. Before going to these we put up another covey, which took to the woods, and, following them, we bagged a few more. We then returned to the thicket, which was quite narrow, and here we killed about all the birds remaining in the first covey. Nearly every likely field contained birds, and at noon, when we reached the wagon,



A LIKELY PLACE—"RAZ" (51,387) AND "PRINCESS ANNE."

we had over a hundred partridges. In the afternoon we directed the driver to proceed up the road to a farm-house, where we were to remain several days, and, continuing our shooting, we shot about fifty more partridges, nine ruffed grouse, and a woodcock. We also shot a few rabbits and squirrels—killing the latter as the quickest way of getting back one of our dogs, which had been hunted on squirrel by my friend's father, and which, deserting us at the sight of a squirrel, was deaf to all entreaties to return until that squirrel was properly killed. We remained a week in the country, shooting meanwhile one wild turkey, fairly pointed in the heavy stubble by one of my dogs, and, upon our return, had a wagon-load of game, much to the delight of our friends in town. Having the wagon at our command, we hunted over a vast amount of country, going in a new direction each day. Notwithstanding our success

when we left there was but little diminution of the game. Such was partridge-shooting a few years ago, and such it would be to-day in the same locality, were it not for the market-gunners shooting on the ground, and for several bad winters, when whole coveys were frozen to death.

The partridges, when much shot at, become very wild and wary. They frequently arise quite out of range, and sometimes run before the dogs to the most impenetrable cover. "Educated birds" is a familiar term among sportsmen for the birds which exhibit such cunning. Forester gives an account of a covey which he found while shooting with an old comrade when returning home late in the evening, and when within two hundred yards of his hospitable tavern. Their three dogs came to a point, and a large bevy jumped up before them. "We got in our four barrels," he says, "and killed four birds handsomely; and marked the birds over the corner of a neighboring wood, lowering their flight so rapidly, that we had no doubt of finding them on a buckwheat stubble, surrounded by thick sumach bushes, and briery hedges, which lay just beyond the grove.

"We hunted till it was quite dark, however, without moving the birds. On going out the next morning, we drew the bogs blank, and it became evident that they had roosted in the place, wherever it was, to which they had flown on being disturbed. We set off, therefore, again in that direction, hoping to find them on their feeding ground, but spent the greater part of the morning trying for them in vain. We then took our dogs in a different direction; and after a day's sport—whether good, bad, or indifferent, I do not now remember—again found our bevy in the same bogs, killed a brace of them only, in consequence of their rising wild, and the evening having grown dark, and again marked them over the same wood corner—the birds literally flying over the top of the very same crimson maple which they had crossed the previous evening. It was too late to look farther after them that night, and I knew that they would not be in the bogs on the following morning,—we took, therefore, a different beat, and heard no more of my bevy.

"On the third day, however, being piqued by the escape of these birds, I determined to spare no pains to find their hiding-places. We proceeded accordingly to the bogs the first thing in the morning, found them before they had quitted their roost, and drove them for the third time over the top of the same red maple.

"These birds, be it observed, were on my old companion's own farm, every inch of which we knew thoroughly, and on which there was not a brake, or tuft of rushes, likely to harbor a single bird, much less a bevy, with which we were not acquainted. We spent four hours beating for these birds again in vain, and left the ground in disgust and despair.

"In returning home, however, that night, we recrossed the same fields; and expecting nothing less than to find game, I was walking down the side of a snake-fence, along which grew a few old apple trees, with my dogs pretty well fagged at my heel, and my gun across my shoulder. Suddenly, out of the mouth of an old cellar, over which a cottage had stood in past days, up whirled a bevy of quail, and away over the very same tree-top, but now in the opposite direction. On examining the cellar, the inside of which was filled with briers and weeds, we found conclusive proof in the numerous droppings

of the birds that they had been in the constant habit of sitting therein, attracted thither probably, in the first instance, by the apples which had fallen into the hollow from the trees overhead."

The partridges, when scattered, remain quiet for some time and then begin to call each other with a melodious, oft-repeated whistle of three syllables, most familiar to sportsmen—"Quoi-i-he, Quoi-i-he," as Elliot writes it.

When the snow begins to fall the partridges remain close together until they are often quite buried in it. If a crust is frozen on top of the snow the birds are unable to escape, and whole coveys are to



PARTRIDGE-SHOOTING IN KANSAS.

be found frozen to death. Some years ago the partridges were almost exterminated in Ohio, a heavy crust having formed on the snow. The legislature took notice of the matter, and protected for several years the few remaining birds which had escaped, and the birds at the end of the close period were fairly abundant again. The partridges will stand an immense amount of cold, provided the crust does not form and they can get about and feed. The winter of 1898-99 was a very severe one in the central States. The thermometer registered several degrees below zero for days at a time, but there was but little snow. While shooting woodcock recently, I heard the call "bob-white" in every direction, and the dog found and pointed several birds, indicating that they did not suffer much from the extreme cold.

The dogs, setters or pointers, should point birds when quite young and without any training. They should at an early age be taught to come at the sound of a whistle, and should be made familiar with the sound of a gun. When taken to the field they should be taught to move to the right or left

at a motion of the hand, and, as Forester says, they cannot be managed with too little shouting. One, at least, of a brace should be taught to retrieve the dead and wounded birds.

At evening, while the events of the day are retold before the fire, the birds are strung in bunches of six, and the favorite dog is a silent witness to the count.

1. BOB-WHITE (*Colinus virginianus*) (Linn.). Hab.—Eastern United States and southern Ontario, from southern Maine to south Atlantic and Gulf States; west to central South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and eastern Texas. Of late years has gradually extended its range westward along lines of railroad and settlements; also, introduced at various points in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Idaho, California, Oregon, and Washington. Breeds throughout its range. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 289; B., 471; R., 480; C., 571.

Male—Reddish brown, with black markings and touches of gray; buff throat; stripe over the eye, white; black beneath the white throat-patch; waved lines of black upon the breast; bill, black; legs, gray. Length, about ten and a quarter inches; extent, fifteen to sixteen inches.

Female—Resembling male in general appearance, but a little smaller; throat-patch and line over eye yellowish brown or buff. Weight, about seven ounces. Trumbull, Nam. & Por. Birds, 147. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. Am., 19.

2. FLORIDA BOB-WHITE (*Colinus virginianus floridianus*) (Coues). Hab.—Florida. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 289a; R., 480a; C., 572. A little smaller than No. 1, with somewhat darker plumage. Pattern and markings similar. Trumbull, Nam. & Por. Birds, 149. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. Am., 32.

3. TEXAN BOB-WHITE (*Colinus virginianus texanus*) (Lawr). Hab.—Southern and western Texas, south to central Tamaulipas and southern Nuevo Leon, Mexico; Western Mexico, near Guadalajara. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. Am., 35. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 289b; B., 472; R., 480b; C., 573.

4. MASKED BOB-WHITE (*Colinus Ridgwayi*) (Brewst). Hab.—Sonora to southern Arizona. Am. Ornith. U. Ck. List, 291; Auk, II, April, 1885, 199. Elliot, Gal. Gam. B. N. Am., 38; P. Aud., Ornith. Biog. i, 1831, 338; Wilson, Am. Ornith. vi, 1812, 21; B. B. & R., N. A. B. iii, 468; Coues' Key, 1872, 236; Coues' B. N. W., 431; Forester, Field Sports 1, 219; Amory R. Starr in Sh. Up. Mar. and Str. (Leffingwell), 139; Chapman Bird Life, 19, 110; Bates, Gam. B. N. Am., 96; Lewis, Am. Sportsman, 65.

In addition to the above from the Check List, a number of varieties are given in an article in the Auk (April, 1898, pp. 115 *et seq.*), as inhabiting Mexico and Central America. These are named Grayson's Bob-White, Pueblo Bob-White, Black-Breasted Bob-White, Godman's Bob-White, Coyolco's Bob-White, Black-Headed Bob-White, Salvin's Bob-White, Guatemala Bob-White, and Yucatan Bob-White. These birds, as their names would indicate, have the same whistle, and they are, no doubt, purely geographical forms of the familiar bird of our farms.

Outing, January, 1897, "Quail-Shooting on the Snow."



THE PARTRIDGES OF THE PACIFIC COAST



CALIFORNIA—a word originally associated with gold, but more recently with vast agricultural enterprises. The name brings to me fond recollections—recollections more of travel and sight-seeing, however, than of game. The sportsman who goes to the Pacific Coast may well take his gun and his dogs, but the attractions of San Francisco, the Cliff House, the sail on the bay, Angel Island, Golden Gate, the strange Chinese quarter, the geysers and Callistoga, the far-famed Yosemite—the fairest park in the world, and the giant trees—all prove most diverting. California has, however, many beautiful partridges, noted for their splendid plumage, and one, the mountain bird, is the largest and handsomest partridge in America.

The California partridges are of a slate-blue color, handsomely marked, and their heads are

adorned with beautiful plumes. The mountain partridge is larger than any of the others, and approaches in size the partridges of Europe.

There are two sub-species very similar in color and markings. The plumed partridge inhabits the Sierra Nevada, both slopes—east to the Panamint Mountains and to Mount Magruder, Nevada; south to the coast ranges from San Francisco Bay to Lower California. The San Pedro partridge is found in the San Pedro Mountains, Lower California. I first observed the mountain partridges many years ago in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and found them quite tame. They evidently had not been much shot at, and ran from the mountain roads into the forest. Some of them flew to the branches of the trees, and I was enabled to approach them within easy range.

The valley partridges are much smaller, but very handsome and graceful birds. The California partridge inhabits the coast region of California south to Monterey, and has been introduced into Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. The sub-species is now called the Valley partridge, and lives in the interior valleys of California and foothills of the Sierra Nevada, east to the Panamint Mountains, and south to Cape St. Lucas.

All of the California partridges are swift of foot, and run before the dogs. They are, therefore, inferior to the Bob White as objects of pursuit. When well scattered they sometimes lie fairly well. They all arise with a whirring sound, fly rapidly, are excellent marks, and very good to eat.

Many of the California mountain and valley partridges are taken in traps and snares of various kinds, and they are abundant in the markets. The Indians use the black plumes from the head to decorate baskets. Mr. F. D. Goodhue informs me that they take them in immense numbers in traps made of reeds with wide wings converging towards a covered inclosure. The baskets shown in my illustration are from Mr. Goodhue's collection. The one in the center is decorated about its rim with an hundred or more partridge plumes.

The Indians use some of the captured birds for food, but fortunately release most of them, having robbed them of the plume. The Indians also use many feathers from the woodpeckers and other birds. One of the baskets resembles a surface of red plush, being covered with the red feathers from the heads of the woodpeckers.





THE CALIFORNIA VALLEY PARTRIDGES



THE Valley partridge is found quite abundant in the valleys and foothills of the Pacific States south to Cape St. Lucas, where Mr. Xanthus found them breeding in great numbers. The flocks contain from twelve to one hundred birds.

The difference distinguishing the sub-species of the California partridge designated as the Valley partridge is too slight to represent in black and white, as the pattern is the same.

The Valley partridge is of a slate-blue color, with olive brown markings. His chin and throat are black, effectively margined with white. He has a black plume or crest, and is altogether a very handsome bird. As a game bird, and from an epicurean point of view, he is inferior to the common partridge of the eastern States.

He runs through the chaparral before the dogs with marvelous rapidity, and often takes wing when far out of range. His flight is rapid, whirring along like the common partridge; but, as he alights, his feet begin to go before he touches the ground, and when he is fairly down he is off at such a great pace that it is difficult to tell where the flying ceases and the running begins. Some years ago, with a party of friends, I left the railway at Merced in an open wagon, our destination being the Yosemite Valley. It was very dusty, and on the way I remarked the number of partridges seen in the road. The coveys ran rapidly before the team, and then took wing and flew

away into the brush. After some time we began counting the coveys as we put them up, and counted seventeen in the two hours that followed before we stopped for the night.

The Valley, or blue quail, as they are often called, are very trying to good dogs; but I am informed by sportsmen who have had more experience with them than I, that when they are well scattered and somewhat tired out, they lie well and offer good shooting. Towards the south the difficulties of cactus are added, and the dogs are continually stopping to pull out the spines. Mr. Goodhue informs me that he shot with a gentleman in southern California, who had many birds on his plantation, and who had cut paths for the dogs through a large field of cactus, which was a harbor of refuge for many coveys. They proceeded to put up the coveys, which at once flew to this cover, and when a sufficient number

was on the ground they went in with the dogs, and, moving about on the prepared paths, had fine points and killed many birds, on one occasion no less than ten dozen birds.

The California partridge builds its nest on the ground. There are usually twelve or fifteen eggs. The young, like the young of Bob White, are very precocious, and run about upon leaving the shell. The food of these partridges consists of insects, seeds, and berries, and they are said to be very fond of grapes.

In the autumn many coveys come together and large packs are formed, when the birds, like the grouse, become wilder and are much more difficult to approach.

These partridges have been introduced into Washington and the islands of Puget Sound, and have become very abundant. Elliot found them in good numbers in Vancouver Island, but they were not indigenous. The



THE VALLEY PARTRIDGE.

Valley partridge is said to be paler in color than the California variety. Elliot says it has been introduced into Utah, and flourishes there in all suitable localities. It withstands cold very well, for Bendire states that in the upper Heamath Valley, Oregon, he found a small covey which passed successfully through the winter of 1882, though the thermometer registered more than once considerably below zero, and the next spring there were two coveys of half-grown birds. In Lower California very dry seasons occasionally occur, and it is a singular fact, and this has been proved by several careful observers, that during such periods the Valley partridge does not breed, but the large flocks that are formed during the autumn remain unbroken all summer. The cause of this curious condition of affairs may be the scarcity of seeds and tender grasses, which, from lack of moisture, have not appeared in the customary abundance. However, if the winter rainfall has been of the usual quantity, then the coveys break up in March and mating begins. The fact is a very remarkable one, as it shows the suppression of the amatory instinct (we can

hardly imagine at the will of the bird), at a time when, if it were allowed to have its usual sway with the consequent result, the probability would be that the young would perish from lack of food. But it would seem that the bird's volition had nothing to do with the case, for, as Mr. Anthony states in a letter to Captain Bendire, individuals obtained by him in April, May, and June, during one of these dry seasons, exhibited but a very slight development of the ovaries. The habits of the two varieties are very much alike. Elliot pronounces them, as a game bird to hunt with a dog, very unsatisfactory and disappointing. These partridges live on the prairie and grass fields, and are seldom found in the woods.



CHAMPION COUNT GLADSTONE IV (28,000).

Though more abundant, says Van Dyke, near sea-level, the California Valley partridge is equally at home at an elevation of a mile or more above it. It drinks plenty of water or goes without it with apparently equal ease, and seems quite as happy in the glare of the sun-lit plain as in the cool arbors of wild-rose, sycamore, and wild grape that form dense shades along the creek bottom. Alike to him are the settler's garden and the lofty hill-top miles away from sight or sound of man; and though he can never be satiated with raisin-grapes or strawberries, he will keep quite as fat and cheerful upon the scanty picking of dry grass-seed upon the stoniest hillside.

The partridge was very abundant through California, especially in some of the southern counties. It is still quite abundant in many places, but nowhere are the birds so numerous and tame as they were a few years ago. Mr. Van Dyke says that for many years it was a simple matter for a good shot to bag two hundred in a day in San Diego County, and dozens of market-shooters shipped an average of 10,000 apiece for the season. "Before the gun," says the same writer, "this bird makes in some respects more

sport than Bob White, while in other respects the shooting is decidedly inferior. For one who knows how to handle the Valley partridge, the shooting is much less fatiguing, and much more certain to yield a good bag, than any shooting to be found in the eastern States. The shooting is nearly all open or in low brush, under the clearest of skies, with great mountains looking down upon one from all directions."

Mr. Van Dyke says further: "Most of the Californians claim that their Valley partridge is a far harder bird to shoot than Bob White. Beyond question it is a far harder bird to kill; but taken under the same circumstances, and especially at the same distance of rising, it certainly is not a harder bird to hit. It flies no faster and twists no more than Bob White does. Nevertheless, it is true that it bothers the best shots very much at first. Capt. Ira Paine, on his first introduction to this bird some years ago, a few miles back of San Diego, missed his first nine birds in succession, all single birds, all within easy range, and all missed clean, before he settled down to steady shooting. Van Dyke advises the shooter not to attempt to bag anything at first, but to spend all the time in breaking and scattering the flock. This can be done only by rapid and repeated flushing, without giving them time to get together again. Firing over them, and especially in front of them, materially aids this scattering. Wherever the flock alights the first time, lose no time in getting there. At each charge you make upon them they will scatter wider when they alight. If quickly handled you will have them scattered over fifteen or twenty acres at the second or third flushing, which should not take more than fifteen minutes in all; but even now turn your attention first to any considerable number that may have kept close together, and break and scatter every bunch as fast as possible. You may now have 1,000 or 1,500 quail fairly scattered over twenty or thirty acres of good cover, and in a state of such alarm that they will trust more to hiding than to their legs. Quite a number will still run away on the sides, and at every report of the gun some will rise and make off; but these latter will not fly far, and will generally lie all the better when they alight. If you are wise, you will now tie your dog to a shady bush, lay aside your heavy coat and all else that is unnecessary, for unless you travel fast and work rapidly, too many of the birds will yet steal away from you."

Tie the dog to a bush! Think of it, my worthy sportsmen, who consider the observation of thoroughbred setters or pointers as more than half the fun, and you will be prepared to agree with me that the California partridge is not to be compared as a game bird with our own Bob White.

The California partridge does not whistle like our partridge, but utters notes which are compared by Baird to those of a woodpecker. Soda Lake, the "sink" of the Mohave River, is said to be just where this species and the Gambel's quail or partridge find a neutral ground. The western bird follows the water-courses toward the east until arrested by drouth.

Mr. Van Dyke, writing recently for *Recreation*, says we would hardly recognize in the California partridge of to-day the bird which he described a few years ago.

"No other bird has kept such even pace with the improvements in guns, or has been so ingenious in devising new ways of bothering the shooter. Though tame in a certain way, he never was an easy bird to kill by any fair method of hunting. The large flocks into which the bevies used to concentrate in autumn,

were so bold, so noisy, so easily seen at a distance, and so easily approached, up to a certain point, that though they perplexed the beginner more than any other bird, and made even the expert shot from the East wish, for a time, he had never come to California, yet respectable bags could generally be made, on account of the numbers of the birds. Experts often made bags that seemed almost incredible.

"There never was a time when one could start a single bevy of fifteen birds and get any such number out of them, even with the best of dogs or under the best conditions, as one generally can get of Bob



STORM IN THE YOSEMITE VALLEY.

Whites or pinnated grouse. If the California partridges kept together, they were sure to run the moment they struck the ground; so that by the time a slow walker, or one who wanted to keep his dog in good training, arrived at the place where they had lit, they were a hundred yards farther on, and generally going up a hill, from which they could look back and see you come puffing through the brush. If they scattered, they scattered as you never saw birds do before. The number of acres of hillside, brush, rocks, and ravines to a bird seemed marvelous; while ground that before was but a gentle slope seemed suddenly on end when you had to climb it to get a shot. Few things were more provoking than, after toiling up a hundred feet of hillside, to have a bird fly backward and fall two hundred feet or more down the hill. The question, whether to climb again the slope you had just descended to retrieve the fallen bird,

or to hunt a new flock, was often one of the most puzzling the human intellect has had to grapple with in recent ages. Equally conducive to intense thought was the falling of a bird on the other side of a deep ravine, after carrying, a hundred yards or more, about half the shot there was in your gun. The mental discipline resulting from the falling of another in the middle of a patch of cactus, that he had not been skillful enough to see when he fired, has made many a shooter a better business man for the rest of his life.

"The good bags once so frequently made resulted from the great numbers of the birds in a flock, running sometimes into the thousands, and from scattering them in the right kind of ground. Then one could pick shots to suit the nature of the ground. If a bird should fall in a bad place, or too far away, you would let him go, for you were sure to have another shot in a minute or two. And when the flock finally became too widely scattered, or did not act just right in the first place, you would let them go and find another flock.

"Those days are gone. We now have to take such flocks as we can find. We no longer try to teach them what sort of cover they should choose, but bow to their selection; and the task of landing a bird anywhere is so much greater than it once was that we now shoot first and glance over the falling place afterward. In many respects, too, the nature of the partridge has materially changed. The big flocks are no more, but the birds are now found more in bunches of fifty to seventy. Instead of being in the valleys, and showing themselves plainly on open ground morning and evening, they are mostly up in the hills, among the brush and rocks; and many of them are so far up in the hills that you may never find them unless you climb that high in following up other partridges that you have started lower down."

Again, he says: "A few years ago the great difficulty with the large flocks was to scatter them so that they would lie close enough to give good shots at single birds, and lie long enough to enable one to take things easy. Unless you were quick of foot and lost no time trying to pick up any fallen birds, the flock would run together at the spot where it first alighted, and by the time you reached there would be a hundred yards away, every member plying its legs in great style up the nearest hillside. It was necessary to start and scare them again, sometimes three or four times, before they could unite again.

"We are now relieved of all such anxieties. The principal trouble is to hold them together. Generally they radiate at the first rise, like the leaves of a fan, and their aspirations often embrace half the horizon. Nothing is more conducive to deep meditation than the moments you now spend, with mouth agape, as the flock swings high in a long line over a hilltop. They look so pretty as they string over the hill, in a line of black dots, twisting and curling in all sorts of ways, some with wings set in curves, some with them straight out, others with them held high up, but all vanishing you know not where."

I have quoted Mr. Van Dyke somewhat at length, since he is most competent to describe the California partridge-shooting as it is to-day. For my part I much prefer running the setters over the high plains for the sharp-tailed grouse, or on the eastern prairies for the prairie grouse and—best of all—the Bob White.

